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# Hansard

## Official Report of Debates

### Legislative Assembly of Ontario

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly**  
Estimates, Office of the Chief Election Officer

**First Session, 34th Parliament**  
Wednesday, November 23, 1988



Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer  
Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

## STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, November 23, 1988

The committee met at 3:41 p.m. in room 151.

After other business:

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### ESTIMATES, OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER

Vote 501, Office of the Chief Election Officer program; item 1, Office of the Chief Election Officer:

**Mr. Chairman:** Do you have any comments with regard to the estimates, Mr. Bailie?

**Mr. Bailie:** Mr. Chairman, if you have a chance to peruse the estimates, you will see that we are actually asking for less than we asked for last year, so that is the good news.

**Mr. Chairman:** The bad news is that it is in American dollars—is that right?

**Mr. Bailie:** The reason is that during an election year we have overtime costs. They were in the previous fiscal year and this year we just did not need as much; that is what makes this decrease in the amounts we are asking for. Also, we had one staff member eliminated. Actually we are going to appoint a new staff member, but it is taking a while to draft the job description and have the interviews; which incidentally start tomorrow, I am informed. That is why what we have asked for in the fiscal year 1988-89 is actually less than the previous year. I would be prepared to answer any other questions on this that you have.

**Mr. Furlong:** I am not sure I understood what you said. I am looking at this document that I have and it says 1986-87 actuals. Then you have 1987-88 estimates. Do we have the 1987-88 figures? We do not know what those actuals are going to be.

**Mr. Bailie:** No.

**Mr. Furlong:** Well, how do you say that your 1988—are we dealing with 1988-89 or are we dealing with 1987-88?

**Mr. Bailie:** We are dealing with 1988-89.

**Mr. Furlong:** That is not lower than what you estimated in 1987-88 then.

**Mr. Bailie:** If you look at page 1, salaries and wages, the first line, the estimates are \$516,000 for 1987-88.

**Mr. Furlong:** I do not have that.

**Mrs. Sullivan:** On a point of order, Mr. Chairman: We do not have the full estimates documentation.

**Mr. Bailie:** We have some copies. I am sorry about that. I thought you would have the details that were approved by the Board of Internal Economy last year, or some time ago.

If you turn to page 1, you will see the 1986-1987 actual and the 1987-1988 estimates. In answer to your question, at the time this was approved by the Board of Internal Economy we did not have the actuals for 1987-1988, but we have those estimates and the estimates for 1988-1989 are \$6,300 less. That is what I was mentioning. The employee benefits are \$1,200 less. The total then is \$7,500 less. It is not a great deal, but I just wanted you to be aware that is what those brackets mean.

On the following pages are breakdowns of those main details. You can see the classified salaries amount to \$494,200 and summer students \$15,500. That gives you that total of \$509,700. Then the employee benefits breakdown is there too.

**Mr. Chairman:** While we are on that, Mr. Bailie—or do you want to go through the whole thing first?

**Mr. Bailie:** No, that is pretty well it. The rest is just all background information to that and I would be only too happy to answer questions.

**Mr. Chairman:** I just have one short one. Why would you have summer students? What do they do that cannot be done during the course of the year by others, or is this a way of accommodating students?

**Mr. Bailie:** The first reason is that we have co-operated, as we have been asked to do, with the summer student program that was established by the province. That is the first answer, but actually we find over the years that some who began with us as summer students are now permanent employees. We find some who really take an interest and come back for another summer. We only allow them to come back for two summers so that we spread these opportunities around.

It is really, number one, to co-operate with the program the province has to assist students, to



give them something meaningful and useful to do in the summer, I guess to raise funds for college.

**Mr. Chairman:** What do they do?

**Miss Wells:** We have a very small permanent staff. There are only 14 of us, so when we have summer students, it enables the staff to take their summer vacation. The main jobs they do are clerical work—filing, photocopying and answering the telephone. Over the last two summers, with a minority government situation and getting ready for the next election, we used them to go through the poll material from the 1985 election. We always go through the poll material to establish where we have made mistakes or what can be improved on in the forms and things like that; so they do research projects as well.

**Mrs. Sullivan:** I would like to ask a question relating to one of the recommendations that is in your Election Act review, and that relates to the training of returning officers. I am wondering if you have included in these estimates funds for additional training resources.

**Mr. Bailie:** As a matter of fact, in the final pages you will see proposals for reclassifications. One of our more efficient clerical people has been tested in two or three elections and we got permission to move her up into the administrative category with the approval of this budget. She is going to have, and has had in the past, a fair bit to do with the training program.

Also, the final proposal there is to have a bilingual information officer who will assist Miss Wells, who primarily has these responsibilities, she is really our chief trainer of returning officers. As you are aware, Mrs. Sullivan, we intend to considerably enhance our training program for returning officers. This was one way we could have some of the information services that were previously performed by Miss Wells and her other two assistants handled by another person with more specific training in that area, which would allow all three of them to spend more time on training and devising training procedures and training manuals for returning officers. In a way, this budget does respond to it, even though it does not mention it.

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**Mrs. Sullivan:** So in your proposed manpower requirements there is not an additional person for training; indeed, you are working from within your already existing complement.

**Mr. Bailie:** That is right.

**Mrs. Sullivan:** Thank you.

**Mr. Bailie:** By the way, the reason we are is because in the previous Board of Internal

Economy meeting I asked for a full-time training officer and it was turned down, so we decided to do some adjustment. It will be reasonably effective, though it is possible we may come back on that other subject yet.

**Mr. Furlong:** I am still somewhat confused, and I guess it is because I have these two documents. On the one hand I see that the total estimates for 1988-89 are \$618,600. That is also consistent with the letter from the Board of Internal Economy. Then I look at your estimates and I do not know which figures are right. Is it \$580,900? What is the actual estimate?

**Mr. Bailie:** Okay; I am sorry. These are our estimates; the proposals on the following pages are not included at the time this is printed because we have not had approval. It is not until we get the letter saying they have been approved that we know the final figure. I am sorry; I should have understood your question. The \$618,600 includes the estimates as I have presented them to the board, plus my proposals to hire one additional person and move two people up two categories. You do not have the breakdown of those two figures. We presented them to the board at that time. The salaries and the effect of the two salary increases bring it to \$618,600.

**Mr. Furlong:** Thank you.

**Mr. J. M. Johnson:** If you turn to the estimates, page 8, the bottom three program descriptions; the second one, "Training and payments of all election officials and the rentals, equipment and supplies;" where do you store, for example, the polling boxes that are used during the election?

**Mr. Bailie:** Our system now is that we have a disposable ballot box.

**Mr. J. M. Johnson:** It is only used for the one election.

**Mr. Bailie:** It is a reinforced corrugated container and it is used just for one election. In fact, the cost of it is not much more than we were previously paying for cleaning the other ballot boxes.

**Mr. J. M. Johnson:** So you have no storage problem.

**Mr. Bailie:** There is no storage problem as far as ballot boxes are concerned.

**Mr. J. M. Johnson:** What do you have to store?

**Mr. Bailie:** We have in storage the documents that were in the ballot box during the election day. They are sent back to the returning office and then back to our office, where by law they



must be kept for one year in case there would be an inquiry or an investigation. They are actually kept longer, because once the year is over we go through these poll books to see how the poll official performed, what exceptions were made, whether the instructions were understood, and just generally how we can improve the system.

**Mr. J. M. Johnson:** You do not have an expensive storage system then.

**Mr. Bailie:** An expensive one? At the present time, because our location is a rather expensive location and it is hardly ideal to have warehouse facilities on it, I would have to agree that we have a fairly expensive—

**Mr. J. M. Johnson:** Is it in downtown Toronto?

**Mr. Bailie:** Yes, downtown Toronto.

**Mr. J. M. Johnson:** Would it not be better in Wiarton?

**Mr. Bailie:** Wiarton? It sounds like an interesting place.

**Mr. McClelland:** Brampton North.

**Mr. Bailie:** Orangeville, anyway.

Interjections.

**Mr. J. M. Johnson:** I am really quite serious. Would it not be better in a less expensive rental area?

**Mr. Bailie:** If you are talking strictly about the unit cost of storing things, it would be less. But I pointed out to the Board of Internal Economy at the meeting yesterday that there would be additional costs to separate an operation that has 14 permanent employees. Because I am an officer of the Legislature, I should be reasonably close to the Legislature. If we were to divide the small office I have, there would be the attendant cost of setting up two separate units.

**Mr. J. M. Johnson:** What about the fifth floor of this building?

**Mr. Bailie:** The fifth floor? I think our lift trucks would be a little too heavy. I do not think it would be safe.

**Mr. J. M. Johnson:** Were you serious when you suggested the possibility of a move to North Bay?

**Mrs. Sullivan:** Yes.

**Mr. Bailie:** I should ask Barbara.

**Mr. J. M. Johnson:** We will leave that one.

I have one more question. In the third section it says, "This office serves government ministries, agencies and the public on a continuing basis by providing and publishing historical information relating to provincial elections, legislatures,

cabinets and political candidates." Could not part of that function, or a lot of it, be carried out by the legislative library? Once you provide it with the information, could it not record it and look after those requests for information?

**Mr. Bailie:** Certainly, it is a subject we could explore. What would you say, Miss Wells?

**Miss Wells:** The legislative library has done an extensive research project on members of the Legislature. Ours is candidates, so I do not see a problem. The information we have is on computer at the Queen's Park computing branch. Because there was no other source for it and we had the records in our office, we have been compiling it and looking after it, but if it were the opinion of the committee or of the Legislature that someone else should have that responsibility, we could certainly provide the records to the legislative library.

**Mr. J. M. Johnson:** I would have assumed the library would want all that information anyway.

**Mr. Bailie:** We supply them with the current information.

**Mr. J. M. Johnson:** But is it a duplication?

**Miss Wells:** No, we do not provide it at this time.

**Mr. J. M. Johnson:** Okay.

**Mr. Chairman:** Any other questions?

**Mr. Furlong:** I do not know whether this has anything to do with estimates, but returning officers, I take it, are part of your statutory appropriation.

**Mr. Bailie:** That is right.

**Mr. Furlong:** I see. What is the status of a returning officer? Once they are appointed, do they do anything in nonelection years? Do they report to you?

**Miss Wells:** As you know, Mr. Furlong, the returning officers are order-in-council appointments. Even during an election, they do not come under the authority of the Chief Election Officer. He provides them with administrative guidance. Between elections, they are working on election-related matters. One of the things they are required to do is to watch for population shifts and do demographic studies in their electoral districts.

Their main responsibility is to make sure their polling division boundaries are up to date and accurate. There is a requirement in the Election Act that these be reviewed on an annual basis or as directed by the Chief Election Officer. We did not do a review of that in 1988 because of the



majority government situation, but probably in the fall of 1989 we will be looking at that.

**Mr. Furlong:** Are they paid remuneration on an annual basis?

**Miss Wells:** No, they are not. The only fees they would receive between elections would be on the review and revision of their polling division boundaries, or if they came into Toronto for any training courses or for storage of election supplies.

**Mr. Furlong:** Do they know they are supposed to be doing these things or do they just take it on your direction?

**Miss Wells:** We certainly give them direction on this. It is included in their training program. Each new returning officer was given six days of training before the 1987 election. That was supplemented by many memos and manuals during and after the election.

**Mr. Furlong:** Thank you.

**Mr. Breaugh:** I have a number of items I would like to raise. Maybe you would let me just get them all on the record and then respond to as many as you can today and others later.

In the latest federal election we have begun to see now intervention by third parties, those not directly in the electoral process, in a rather massive way. We have not had that experience in Canadian politics. Someone asked me the question how the Ontario Election Act would govern that and I am at a loss to explain how it would.

We have defined what a political party is and the process whereby it is registered and identified the restrictions that we place on it in terms of publication of expenditures of money, identification of who actually belongs to that party, who are the proper officers, all of that. But the intervention of outside groups, many of whom are, shall we say, ad hoc groups—I mean they are groups that I have never heard of, who get together, give themselves a name and then proceed to spend large amounts of money, principally on newspaper advertising this time, but there would be nothing to stop them from using—and they have on other occasions used—other forms of advertising prior to the campaign period and during the campaign.

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Now, anyone who wants to do so can try to assess their impact, but I do not think there is any denying that they had an impact, that they were participants in the electoral process and that, so far, they are beyond the scope, I think, of both federal and provincial legislation in terms of

regulation. I am interested in your observations on that.

I am not as upset as some I have talked to recently about it, but, for example in my own local circumstances, the National Citizens' Coalition was very active prior to the election period and somewhat less active during the actual election period. There is no way of determining who belongs to that organization, how they get their funding, how they spend their money or what they did. I do know that they mailed some 60,000 pieces of literature into the riding. I do know that they bought and paid for, at least radio advertising that I heard and I believe some television advertising. I know that they did a substantial public relations campaign. I do not know the specifics of it, because there is no record of exactly how much money they spent, how they spent it or when they spent it.

Because it is now apparently part of our election process that those other than the recognized political parties will be participants, it seems to me that at some point in time we do have to address the question of whether it is legitimate for a group out there to give itself a name and participate in an active way in the electoral process. I know of nothing in our act to regulate that or to prevent people from doing so.

I recall that in the federal act there was consideration given to doing this, but as I recall it was considered by all three political parties to be not controversial; it was not discussed a great deal. One of the groups that would have been affected by the legislation, however, took a different point of view and at the moment when the act was being revised, kind of blew the whistle and no one has cared to pick up the point since.

I would be interested in your considerations as to whether it is possible to regulate or identify it; but I think my main concern is essentially that I am not really happy with the notion that five millionaires could get together, call themselves the Organization to Save Canada, spend their brains out during the course of an election period and we would have no right to know who they are or how much they had spent, nor would they be accountable to anybody else.

At the same time, all of the principal players in the electoral process, the recognized political parties, are tightly regulated to make sure that lists are available; if the lists are not published, if members of the public really want to know who belongs to a political party, there is a reasonable process whereby they can do that, or at least New Democrats can be identified.



The political parties have limits on what they can do, the time periods in which they can advertise, the amounts of money they can spend on certain times. A great deal of regulation goes on in that regard. If it took the next logical turn, the only people who would be hamstrung during the electoral process would be the recognized registered political parties.

For example, if you wanted to make your point on free trade or any other matter, you would be silly to do so as a political party. There would be every incentive in the world not to have the New Democrats, the Liberals or the Conservatives advertise their public positions on a matter. The sensible thing to do would be to avoid all this nasty regulation and five of you meet together elsewhere and decide to spend as much money as you wanted. The only thing you would do is you would not identify that you were really putting forward the platform of a particular political party; just by coincidence you all belong to that same little group and you all belong to this other organization as well and do all your advertising through that source.

I think that before this thing gets out of hand, we are going to have to address ourselves to that issue. I would be interested in your comments on that.

**Mr. Bailie:** As matter of fact, I have been concerned about this for quite a while. As a member of the Council on Governmental Ethics Laws, the phenomenon, as I have studied it, began in California a few years ago. It just kept growing till, to give you an example, for the United States Senate races in California it is estimated that less than one quarter of the money spent on campaigning in those races is spent through the ordinary candidate's office, but rather by what they call PACs, political action committees. It is a growing thing and it is certainly a growing concern. Because of the particular wording of the charter of rights in the US and the very celebrated case of *Buckley v. Valeo* that came up, it was decided that the regulatory bodies could do very little about it.

It is now growing in Canada. I have concerns about it. I certainly addressed these concerns to my colleagues on the commission a year or so ago when we were discussing amendments to the act. At that time there were very few political action committees that were having much of an effect, but I think that if we were to bring it up again, given what has happened in the most recent federal election, they might be just a little more concerned.

I view with concern, as you do, these groups that do not come under regulations and would be difficult to regulate even if you decided to do so. I think members will want to look at this type of phenomenon, if we can call it that, and address it by establishing new rules; but of course, any new rules would be through the Commission on Election Finances, not through the election office. I agree with you that it needs to be addressed. It is surprising how it grew just in the last couple of years.

**Mr. Breaugh:** What I found disturbing is that at its current level it is obvious that you are able to avoid all of the election expenses acts in this country by the simple vehicle of identifying yourself as being not affiliated with a political party. That allows you to break all the rules, to advertise when the parties are not allowed to advertise, to say whatever you want. My election sign has to have identification of who authorized the election sign, but you can put a full-page ad in the *Toronto Star* and you do not have to identify who you are. I think that is one area that does have to be explored.

I appreciate that it is difficult, because the other side of the coin, of course, is that I am not very happy with the notion that you would not allow someone to express his political opinion in whatever way he wants. But I am mindful that you make a mockery of existing Canadian legislation and tradition about regulating how you spend money during an election campaign.

The other thing that has been brought to our attention rather dramatically lately is the problem—

**Mr. Chairman:** Just a moment. Before you go on to another problem, I think Miss Wells would like to respond to that comment.

**Miss Wells:** On your item on the Canada Elections Act, the problem with third-party advertising is actually on the books in that act. When it was drafted, only candidates from political parties could incur election expenses. It was envisaged that this third-party advertising would be a problem, so the Canada Elections Act says that it is an election expense for anyone to spend money to promote or oppose a candidate.

In 1983, just before the 1984 election, the National Citizens' Coalition challenged that under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and that section of the Canada Elections Act was ruled unconstitutional. As a result, the chief electoral officer has not been able to enforce it in the last two general elections because he felt it would not be fair to enforce something on the rest of Canada that could not be enforced in Alberta. I

believe when Bill C-79 was looked at, that was one of the aspects that did fall through on the definition of election expense.

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**Mr. Breagh:** Yes. I think it is at a point now that if an attempt is not made to find a way to regulate this, all of the election expenses acts that are in place in Canada, federally and provincially, might just as well be chucked out the window.

There is absolutely no sense, it is ridiculous to regulate and restrict the political parties from participating in things that are known as politics during election periods when there are absolutely no restrictions on any other groups. When you get right down to it, you have no means of finding out during an election period just exactly who is this group that is pro Canada or the group that is against free trade or the group that wants to save the ducks or the group that wants to strangle the ducks. The fact is that during the critical period of an election, that group could do a massive advertising campaign; six months after you have lost the election you may be able to determine who did you in, but it is of no conceivable use to you.

You really do severe damage to the electoral process unless you have a reasonable mechanism for determining who these groups are and regulating in some way their participation in the electoral process. It really would be the height of hypocrisy to restrict the political parties and let everybody else go at it totally unfettered.

**Miss Wells:** I think there was a bill that had first reading at the federal level on lobby groups. It was to rest with the registrar general in the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, but I do not know what happened with it.

**Mr. Breagh:** It died.

**Mr. Morin:** Just a supplementary on that point: Were there solutions presented by the group that you belong to, by the association that you belong to?

**Mr. Bailie:** Yes, as a matter of fact, they have devised different solutions. However, it seems that because of the wording of the Constitution in the United States and the right of free speech, they seem to be not effective. I think some of the solutions they came up with in their studies might be more effective here because the wording of our Charter of Rights is different.

The studies would be helpful. We have looked at it, and I am not saying that it will solve the problems. I do agree that it is a problem and it should be addressed. I believe it will be. As a member of the commission I certainly will be

making sure that at the next meeting I bring your views to its attention.

**Mr. Breagh:** The other point I would make on that is that I heard some discussion that at various editorial boards in newspapers they were considering the matter of whether it is reasonable for their newspapers to print a major advertising program where it is not clear who is sponsoring it. If it is to be the editorial boards of the major newspapers that make such decisions, it rather takes the responsibility for regulating the election process out of the hands of the chief election officer and turns it over to the unseen editors or whoever controls the newspapers.

I think that we have a multitude of problems intermeshed there, which I suppose would be resolved if newspaper boards said, "We're in the middle of an election and we will not, as a matter of public policy, print in our newspaper advertising which is clearly political in nature but does not tell who is paying for the ads." However in the recent election I guess all of them, in their wisdom, thought the right of freedom of speech was more necessary than the right of the public to know who was paying for all these ads.

**Mr. Bailie:** Yes.

**Mr. Breagh:** That is one area I think we will return to when we do our other review.

I have some other items I would like to get on the record this afternoon. I guess it is because we have had a spate of elections recently. I had an irate woman in to see me who had received her notice of her right to be a voter in the municipal election. She had taken her little card, which was fairly clear, and voted in the advanced poll of the municipal election. She then went across the road to another building to vote in the advanced poll for the federal election. She had, of course, the wrong card, even though in her mind it was a pretty official looking card, and even though in my mind, that card clearly established that she did indeed have the right to vote in both elections.

We discussed at some length and with some vigour just why the hell it was that she got this card from one level of government and that was legitimate and she had to go and vote in one place for one election and in another place for the other, and in one place she had the franchise and across the street she did not have the franchise. I thought she had a good point.

This person is an eligible voter in Canadian politics. As someone who has read the acts municipally, provincially and federally, it was clear to me that she had a legal right that had been identified by one level of government. Why



would that card not be good enough for another level? Or should we all use some basic form of identification so that, once you are clearly shown as an eligible voter at one level that would serve the same purpose at other levels?

It just brought to my mind the fact that we often do establish three separate bureaucracies to do the same thing. They all have little nuances in the particular act that they are responsible to which are totally lost on the public. The end result is that somebody who clearly is a legitimate elector is denied the right to vote because he did not understand the myriad rules that probably three people in Ontario do understand.

I know that we talk to one another at all levels, but is it not time to consider that when someone is an eligible voter he get a clearly identifiable form which serves the purpose at other levels?

I am reminded that at my house during the last six weeks we received a total of eight different forms from two different levels of government, reminding us that four of us are eligible to vote in two different elections. The process at my doorstep was not a cheap one; it was expensive. The process in the returning offices at two levels was not a cheap one; it was expensive. But it certainly was not a perfect system that we had at work there. I am just wondering whether we should be looking to getting one system of enumeration under way which is reasonable.

We all saw newspaper stories where many days before the election was held, in a very public way, people who clearly should have had the right to vote were denied the right to vote. No one could find the returning officer and no level of government could fix the problem. The end result was that someone who clearly was a legal voter in Canada was denied the right to vote because our various bureaucracies could not respond to what was an obvious mistake. That, it seems to me, holds us all up to ridicule.

The other couple of items that I wanted to get on the record this afternoon. I know—

**Mr. J. M. Johnson:** Mike, may I just interject?

**Mr. Breaugh:** Yes, I am sure you will.

**Mr. J.M. Johnson:** Were you talking about municipal, provincial and federal?

**Mr. Breaugh:** Yes.

**Mr. J. M. Johnson:** People can vote in three or four places municipally, but only once provincially and federally.

**Mr. Breaugh:** Yes.

**Mr. J. M. Johnson:** So that someone would have a slip saying he could vote in a municipal level.

**Mr. Breaugh:** Yes.

**Mr. J. M. Johnson:** For example, I could vote in Toronto and in my home town.

**Mr. Breaugh:** Yes.

**Mr. J. M. Johnson:** But only once provincially.

**Mr. Breaugh:** Yes.

**Mr. J. M. Johnson:** So how could you have the slips saying that you could vote?

**Mr. Breaugh:** How many slips did you get? You got at least two federally and at least one municipally, right? Did you sign two forms? I am simply making the argument that the process by which we establish the validity of the voter is a complicated and expensive one and it fails us miserably on several occasions. I am searching for something that is not necessarily simpler but clearer to the public.

I cannot explain how whole subdivisions were missed days before a federal election. That story was reported widely in newspapers: that no one could find the returning officer, that no one at any level of government could get the good common sense under way to say, "A mistake was made and here is how we will correct the mistake." The people were announcing on television not only that a mistake was made, not only that the government screwed up once again, but that in 10 days' time it could not correct that.

I hope that in a provincial election we would have been able to correct that, but voters do not make quite the distinctions that we as politicians do.

**Mr. Bailie:** Mr. Chairman, if I could respond, we did have a meeting that was convened by some of the officials in the municipal affairs department. Mr. Hamel, the Chief Electoral Officer, came down from Ottawa. I was asked to attend the meeting, so we had a three-level meeting about the possibility of having one list, one classification. Miss Wells was there because she had just spent the last two years as Mr. Hamel's executive assistant. She was included because she was of help to both of us. We really thought there was some room there for coming up with one list, one classification. There is the difficulty about owning property. I got three sets of municipal papers because of owning other property. It was marked "nonresident" on two of them and so forth.

On the difficulty you mention that was of concern to you, in our act your problem is taken care of because it says in subsection 4(7), "Where in the opinion of the Chief Election Officer, by reason of any mistake, miscalculation, emergency or unusual or unforeseen circumstance, a situation exists for which no provision is made under this act, he may make such appointments or give such directions as he considers proper and anything done in compliance with any such direction is not open to question, but the Chief Election Officer shall immediately give notice of any such direction to the candidates affected."

If we heard about that in an electoral district, we would advise each one of the candidates that we were sending out a pair of enumerators, even if it was 4 o'clock on election day. We have the power to do that under two sections, that section as well as another in the act. We have the power to respond to a building being left off, one side of the street and so forth, right up until the close of the polls, with the proviso that we make sure the candidates are advised in case someone says: "I heard somebody was enumerating today. Isn't that impossible? Enumeration was over three weeks ago."

We do not call it enumeration. Those people who go out are called revising agents. Under the provincial act, provided we are notified of the problem, we can respond very quickly and we have. Miss Wells was at the by-election in Welland-Thorold. Would you describe what happened?

**Miss Wells:** I walked into the returning office at about 3:30 p.m. and the returning officer said: "I do not know what to do. There is half of a street or subdivision missed." I said: "We will phone Mr. Bailie because it is election day. If it was before election day, I could give you the authority but because it is election day it is an emergency. We will give you authority to appoint revising agents." Then she phoned the committee rooms and got two people back as revising agents and we went over to Thorold and had the street enumerated and the people were able to go and vote.

**Mr. Bailie:** This was, as I say, at 2:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. on election day, so our act definitely gives us the—

**Mr. Breaugh:** See, that is my point. My point is that it is not beyond the capacity of intelligent human beings to resolve these problems. When I go out and address the people in my riding who have been denied the right to vote, they want to hear the noise that if this was only a provincial

election we could do this. They do not want to hear the noise that we have to appoint a revising officer. They want to know why it is one level of government can spend millions of dollars urging people to go and vote and cannot figure out how to put the names of legitimate voters on an enumeration list. It is nonsensical to them and I have to admit they have a point.

If we can spend millions of dollars on ad campaigns saying, "Go vote," and we cannot figure out how to get the voters on the voters' list, there is something wrong. If we can identify where a mistake clearly has been made and we all admit there is a mistake, if we can solve the problem provincially why can we not do it in the same town for the same person in a federal election? Could we not connect them just a bit better?

**Mr. Bailie:** In addition to that, Mr. Breaugh, one of the recommendations we are going to make, and hope the committee and ultimately the Legislature will approve, is that there be an opportunity, as I mentioned earlier for anyone left off the list—because this is better than doing the revision—when they get to the poll, just as it is in Manitoba—I visited their election and went to many polls watching it in operation—you take an affidavit and say, "Look, I am who I say I am and so forth and I sign here," and you are allowed to vote.

We have those affidavits so that we have the security. We can go over them carefully and because they are doing it right in that poll where they have to show identification, they are not even faced with making a second trip. If our recommendations are approved provincially, I can always suggest to my colleagues in Ottawa that they adopt something similar, and municipally as well.

**Mr. Breaugh:** Let me get one final thing on the record and then I will get out of your way. I want to relate to what I think is being kind of caught in a catch-22 here. I recall some years ago when people were arguing that the method by which polling stations were set up was somewhat unique. The public did not quite understand why somebody's house in the middle of a block always got used as a polling station. We engaged in the argument that maybe we should be using public facilities like schools for polling stations, which I admit I thought was a good idea at the time.

Then we went through the arguments that polling stations should be accessible to the handicapped. I certainly agree with that notion. My problem is that what I have wound up with is



something that is untenable by anybody's standards. Where it used to be quite convenient to vote, we have made it about as inconvenient as possible. We have taken some local schools. They are a public facility in the neighbourhood, that is true, but God forbid that 100 per cent of the electors would ever try to go and vote at one time.

I worked at one on Monday that was a school that was used municipally, provincially and federally for elections. It is located in the middle of a huge complex of apartments and town houses in the south end of the city. It has a one-lane driveway. If they had all decided to go and vote between five o'clock and eight o'clock, there would have been fist fights. There were lots of angry words exchanged as it was. In terms of accessibility, the public would clearly have been denied the right. The most we could have produced at that moment on Glen Street would have been one hell of a traffic jam.

It is accessible to the handicapped if they are quite prepared to go around to the back of the school and go up a single ramp and fight their way through the throng to get into the polling station. We have developed a system that tends to have groups of polling stations in a school gym, for example, which on some occasions works okay and on others does not.

I listened during the course of the election to somebody in Toronto who was arguing that this was really awful. Somebody in a building had to go two blocks to vote and was that not inhumane? The sad part was that I really understood the argument that they could have set up a polling station in the lobby of the apartment building, which would have been closer than two blocks, but then most of the people where I worked in Oshawa on election day had to go a whole lot more than two blocks to vote.

I am wondering if we should rethink once again where we establish polling stations. We have gone from one thing that was, I agree, not quite appropriate. We have gone to something else that is maybe a little better in terms of using public facilities like schools, I agree with that. They are somewhat more accessible to people who have certain kinds of handicaps, that is true, but not much more so than, say, the lobby in the building where the person lives.

I am wondering if we can rethink that. Again, it goes back to what I talked about earlier. We have had a lot of elections lately. If we use the same school, perhaps we could muster the argument that is the neighbourhood school, but I am damned if I know why for one election I went to one school and for the next election I went to

another school. Both were inconvenient, awkward and did not have reasonable parking and facilities.

I am just thinking that perhaps it is time we kind of went through that exercise again about what is useful. I do know we have had a fair amount of confusion by people who are used to going to one—usually a school or church as the neighbourhood polling station—and then for some reason the returning officer selects another site. If they are looking for something to do between elections, maybe the returning officers could do a survey of suitable sites to have as polling stations at all levels. There would be a rough list now in any constituency or riding, I would think, of likely places they could use.

We are beginning now to encounter some problems. The problem Mr. Sterling spoke of earlier of using the schools does crop up from time to time in terms of the sharing of facilities—washrooms, parking and access. All of that does cause a problem.

I am just wondering if there is much in the way of a review that could or should be done about the reasonableness of the polling station. I must confess I am caught on this one with what I see happening in other jurisdictions, where quite sensibly in a nursing home the ballot box is moved to a person who is in a bed and cannot get out of his or her bed to go down to the lobby to do it. We understand this can be done, but for everybody else we have made it about as difficult as we could to have them actually cast a ballot.

I am wondering if there are any better solutions to what we are doing in terms of identifying where a polling station should be, what the characteristics are, I guess, of a good polling station and how we utilize that. It strikes me that people are having some difficulty identifying where they go to vote.

1720

**Mr. Bailie:** Yes. As a matter of fact, our training officer, as I call her, has made a careful study of polling place accessibility; I am sorry I did not bring it with me today. I have a firm rule in instructing returning officers, that when they are looking for a location that is accessible for wheelchairs, properly ramped and so forth, they must keep in mind that they cannot—because it is easy to say, "Oh, I found this school here and it is accessible by ramp for wheelchairs, so I will put 14 polls in here so I do not have to look further."

I have told them very explicitly that they can only have a poll grouped with the one adjacent to it; in other words, it has to touch. If anyone has to walk through one poll to another poll to get to the

actual polling place, they must give us, in writing, the reasons why that was necessary and get written approval from my office.

I have tried to stop these vast groupings. I have talked to voters: say, a couple who are a little older and do not walk too well. They are not in a wheelchair, they do not drive and it is their choice not to call one of the parties. Then they find out the poll is 11 blocks away and that with a heart condition, it is too far for them to go. All of a sudden, this poll location that was chosen because it was accessible to wheelchairs is not accessible to someone because it is too far as far as a walk on a cold day is concerned. We try to make sure the groupings are four, five or six.

One other response to that same concern is that at this meeting we held with the people from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Mr. Hamel and I agreed that it would be advantageous and certainly helpful to the voters if we could have coterminous polling division boundaries. The difficulty at the time was that on the one hand the federal act specifically says that a poll must be 250, while our act says a poll should be decided by the returning officer and our guideline is 350, but it was felt we could come together on that.

Then there is the municipal because there is no overall control over the establishment of municipal polls. Though originally the bill that was going to come out on municipal elections would have given some control, that was changed.

We will have to get agreement among these three levels to have coterminous polling subdivisions of approximately 350. I think that would work well, but municipalities that are buying voting machines or vote-counting machines would not particularly like to have polls that small. They would like to have a larger poll so they have fewer machines to buy. There is where the difficulty is in getting us to come together.

I am sure some accommodation, some reasonableness could be found, and it would certainly be desirable. Then hopefully the other item you thought would be helpful would follow—if we had coterminous polling subdivisions there would a lot more chance that the polling locations would be similar, though we could not guarantee it.

**Mr. Breaugh:** Yes. I will just conclude by saying that I was struck, as you got into the last-minute rush of voters after six o'clock in the evening—the place where I worked last Monday was a neighbourhood school. The kids play in the playground, and on this particular day everybody else parked in that playground. There were traffic jams. It was accessible to the handicapped, but

the handicapped had to use the ramped entrance at the rear of the school and then go through some fairly crowded areas to get in there. We were kind of not only defeating our original purpose here, but we were adding some new problems to it.

I think we have to keep an eye on what in reality is occurring here. We have created problems? In the end, there was general confusion in the neighbourhood about just exactly where the polling station was. I am searching for the reasons why the turnout is low and why people have related to me that they do not bother to vote.

It turns out, when you talk to them a little bit, that there are some pretty good practical reasons they do not go to vote. When you look at somebody else who wants to attract their business, that is why shopping centres are not designed in quite that way. They know what the basic requirement is. They know how important access is; it makes a difference to them. Maybe if we did polling stations the way somebody else does a shopping centre, we might get more people voting.

**Mr. Chairman:** The next person is Mr. Matrundola. Mr. Breaugh had some time here. I want to remind all of you that we want to leave at about a quarter to six or a little earlier. I have Mr. Matrundola, Mrs. Sullivan and Mr. Campbell.

**Mr. Matrundola:** I say we have a problem here. On the one hand, we really want to get people to vote and on the other hand, we seem to be trying to do all things possible to prevent people from voting. Do we have revising agents only at the provincial level or also at the federal level?

**Mr. Bailie:** They have them at the federal level, but the present rule is that they can only be added to the list up to 14 days before election day. I am sure you are aware there was Bill C-79 in the House. It even went to second reading, but they were not able to arrange agreement between the three parties. That would have allowed names to be added to the list up to three days before election day, the Friday, but that was not passed.

**Mr. Matrundola:** That was not passed; okay. This is the difference: The public does not know all this; and sometimes even we do not know it. We are confused about it, but the public does not know and they come to us and they complain. I suppose it is an item where we need co-operation at least between the federal and municipal governments to try to reduce the problems, because I believe the municipal elections come



under the provincial government, with the same rules pretty well.

**Mr. Bailie:** Pretty well.

**Mr. Matrundola:** I suggest that perhaps we should have a master list and then eventually update it from time to time. When people go to vote, if they are able to provide their birth certificate, passport or citizenship card, together with proof of address and a sworn affidavit, I believe that should be sufficient for people to vote. It should be sufficient up to the moment they go to vote. That is one point.

The other point is that we are trying to get people to go to vote and then we do all things possible not to let them vote. We have here and everywhere in the world certain privileges of prime ministers and so forth called amnesties. We allow refugees to come in and then at one point we have illegal immigrants and say, "Okay; now everybody can make an application and become a Canadian resident, a landed immigrant."

We have people here in Canada who have probably been here 30, 40 or even 50 years and they are not Canadian citizens. Many people fear to go to fill in the forms and go through the little rigmarole of learning who is the Prime Minister, the Premier, your member of Parliament, the council, your mayor and so forth. After all, once they have learned those few things, I believe we could possibly say that two weeks later they forget about it anyway.

**Mr. Chairman:** What you are saying is that these people, after they have been here 50 years, should be able to vote even if they are not citizens?

**Mr. Matrundola:** No. I suggest—this, of course, is at the federal level but our suggestions can go to the federal level—that anyone who has been here at least 15 years, upon summary application and paying the cost for the application, should be granted Canadian citizenship. That would avoid a lot of problems.

**Mr. Chairman:** I do not think we are in a position to recommend to the federal government or the federal Parliament what it should do. If you want to make your representation you can make it through your member or through the hearings they have, but I think we should limit ourselves to the provincial legislation and how to improve it.

**Mr. Matrundola:** I appreciate your comment and abide by it. However, I did want this to go on the record. I believe it is important because of the fact that people must be citizens first before they

can vote. That is the reason I wanted to bring this to light, because if you are not a Canadian citizen, we could not be discussing this matter here of voting. That is the problem.

1730

I would also like to see the possibility of larger polls because of the cost of having all those people there. I was a scrutineer the other day, and for the number of people who come in the cost involved at each poll is phenomenal. Perhaps if we had larger polls, it would alleviate the cost.

I have extensive experience, as many other people have, of travelling and getting information in different parts of the world. I make it a habit and an interest to study cities and so forth in other nations. Here, people go to vote if they want to go to vote. In some nations, they have a mandatory vote. I do not think I would go so far as to make it mandatory to vote, but perhaps an incentive would help.

In some nations, if people do not vote, this is marked on what is called a sheriff's certificate. For instance, when you purchase a house, they want to see if you have a certificate, that you do not have executions on this deal. In some nations, if people do not vote, they mark on the certificate of execution that he or she has not voted and they are prevented from getting a government job at any level, municipal, provincial, federal or any crown agency at any level. That would be an incentive for people to go and vote, knowing they could not enter certain competitions.

**Mrs. Sullivan:** There are a couple of things I was wondering if the election office had considered, noted or studied. One of them relates mainly to the demographic change that is occurring in Ontario as well as in other jurisdictions. With more and more women working, the enumeration staff frequently is not volunteer any longer.

I noticed in one instance in the federal election that a group of people in my community who belong to a charitable organization agreed to work as enumerators to provide money for that charity. So it was not an enumerator's job; it became a job that was done for the charity. In addition, our local hospital, funnily enough, raised money by compiling voters' lists for the federal election and was paid quite substantially. I thought it was very interesting. It was the first time I had heard of those kinds of activities occurring.

What I am wondering is, if you were to review the impact of changes in society and take those into account, and not only in discussions about

the enumeration process, in the district returning officer process and so on, what other methods could be used? For example, a credit card of identification that would continue, or moving to a high-technology basis in terms of having enumerating work done on an ongoing basis.

**Mr. Bailie:** I point out that we do constantly study these matters, and we have some ideas we would probably want to discuss with the committee once we get into the details. You will notice we have suggested a review of the enumeration system. There are several approaches we could take.

When I was a federal returning officer, I had a church group that used to fold, address and mail out my copies of the voters' list, which in those days was sent out. One of the difficulties we have with using a method like that, as far as doing the enumeration is concerned, is that the present act requires us to accept the names from the candidates. We are going to ask that this be reviewed, because we find the candidates are just too busy with other matters to respond to this.

We got a really mixed reception on that. We had our returning officers in for post-mortem sessions. We had the metropolitan or large city returning officers in. Almost to a man—or should I say to a woman?—they were recommending we get rid of the requirement that the candidates have the right to nominate. Then when we got the 10 or 12 in from eastern Ontario, they said, "What are you talking about?" They did not even understand. They said: "When we get a list, it is 100 per cent. We would have to hire staff to try to go out and do that same job."

It is not just eastern Ontario. It just happened to be the group that spoke up. I am sure, say, out around Kincardine or somewhere they are getting the same kind of response. But in the city centre areas, like Ottawa, Hamilton and Toronto in particular, we found that the candidates appeared not to have enough time, resources or names available to assist us in any way. It would be helpful if we could start out almost on day one on our own. It is a political decision, of course, to decide whether we change this.

There is one other possibility the committee may want to study. I will not get into details. I will just point out to you that in Quebec and Alberta, they have enumeration outside the election period.

What would happen would be that not next year, but say the following year, we would start an enumeration system by bringing in returning officers to train them in the early summer, with a view that around the middle of September they

would do the enumeration. We would have time to carefully train them on this one subject alone and get everything prepared. There would be enumeration of the whole province and that list would then be used at the next election if it were to come within a year. The downside of that is that if the Premier decided to go a little longer in his term, we would then have to do another one because it would not be wise to use a list over a year old.

They run the risk of having two enumerations before each election, not one, but they feel it is better to do enumeration at a time when they are not hurried, when the candidates do not need those people to do canvassing and so forth. It seems, in their opinion, to work well. The cost factor is definitely higher, but it is something we may want to consider when we discuss this subject in greater detail.

**Mr. Campbell:** The point I have is to deal with the way you allocate polls and riding boundaries. I know that before I came on the scene, the members in Sudbury, for example, worked out a way to try to have fairly similar geographic boundaries, if you will, yet it turned out to be a very difficult system because one section of my riding suddenly grew. Where you had a poll of 250, it now had 800.

I wonder if you have considered any look at responding a little faster to changes in population, reacting in a shorter period of time. There is about an 18-year difference between the census and then all the hearings. Some minor boundary changes could be made in some way rather than waiting that long period of time. When the population shifts nowadays go back and forth so much, I am wondering if you have considered that as a process to more fairly reflect the riding size.

**Mr. Bailie:** The example you might want to consider as a committee is that in Quebec, after each election, the chief election officer, in his capacity as chairman of the boundaries commission, makes a report to the House after each election; in other words, reflecting on what has taken place in that election. The House actually gets a report every four to five years. In some cases, and I have studied it, there are some fairly minor changes such as you mentioned, without disturbing any more than maybe 10 per cent of the electoral districts. In that way, these situations do not just grow until they are almost unmanageable. That is something we might consider and discuss.

**Mr. Chairman:** Are there any other questions?



**Mr. Campbell:** I will hold off any other comments.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Bailie and Miss Wells. If members feel they have other questions, we can reconvene another day; if not, we can have the motion now that we adopt the estimates as presented.

**Mr. McClelland:** I have one question and would like a yes or no answer, if I may. Mr. Bailie, you mentioned the post-mortems when you have your officers come in. Do you compile a list of their recommendations and suggestions, those on which there seems to be a fairly general consensus or those that are particularly contentious; and if so, would that be available for us for review?

**Mr. Bailie:** It has not been available in the past because the senior staff sit around and kind of have them coalesce. We make notes and then we discuss it later. But it is something that could be done and we would be prepared to share that with you.

**Mr. McClelland:** I am sure you are aware of it. It would be an interesting inventory of problems that are identified by those who are—

**Miss Wells:** A lot of them were combined in the report.

**Mr. Bailie:** Yes. The report is a response to Mr. McClelland's question, I guess I might say.

**Mr. Chairman:** The question is, shall vote 501 carry?

Vote 501 agreed to.

**Mr. Chairman:** Shall it be reported to the House?

Agreed to.

**Mr. Chairman:** This completes consideration of the estimates of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer.

The committee considered other business at 5:41 p.m.

The committee adjourned at 5:42.

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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY****Chairman:** Epp, Herbert A. (Waterloo North L)**Vice-chairman:** Campbell, Sterling (Sudbury L)

Breagh, Michael J. (Oshawa NDP)

Hampton, Howard (Rainy River NDP)

Johnson, Jack (Wellington PC)

Matrundola, Gino (Willowdale L)

McClelland, Carman (Brampton North L)

Morin, Gilles E. (Carleton East L)

Sterling, Norman W. (Carleton PC)

Stoner, Norah (Durham West L)

Sullivan, Barbara (Halton Centre L)

**Substitution:**

Furlong, Allan W. (Durham Centre L) for Mrs. Stoner

**Clerk:** Forsyth, Smirle**Witnesses:****From the Office of the Chief Election Officer:**

Bailie, Warren R., Chief Election Officer

Stewart, Alan, Policy Adviser

Wells, Loren, Chief Election Clerk and Information Officer





No. M-2

# Hansard

## Official Report of Debates

### Legislative Assembly of Ontario

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly**  
Estimates, Office of the Assembly



**First Session, 34th Parliament**  
Wednesday, November 30, 1988

Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer  
Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

## STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, November 30, 1988

The committee met at 3:37 p.m. in room 151.  
ESTIMATES, OFFICE OF THE ASSEMBLY

**The Vice-Chairman:** I would like to call this meeting of the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly to order. We are speaking to the estimates. We are on vote 201 and we have three hours of the debate left.

I would like to call on the Speaker to come up with the members of his staff. The Speaker will be making a short statement and then we will have a number of witnesses before this committee. I understand those arrangements were made. I am chairing in the absence of Mr. Epp, who was called away.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Vice-Chairman. I would like to thank you, and your committee of course, for giving me the opportunity of putting before you what I feel are the main interest points in the 1988-89 estimates. The study of estimates is probably the only official occasion I have in order to meet with you and discuss and answer your questions with regard to the overall operation of the Office of the Assembly.

The 1988-89 estimates, which all of you have before you, do not reflect any major new direction for the Office of the Assembly, but I would say they reflect a continuation of programs that have been started in recent years. The exceptions to this would have to be the implementation of the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, which shows up for the first time and reflects a spending estimate of \$1.6 million, as well as the new French-language services implementation, which reflects another \$1.1 million. There was also an increase in spending for security services, and the largest amount of increased spending for this fiscal year would have to be the \$3.1 million set aside to cover the impact of the 1987 general election.

This is really all I have to say at this point about the estimates in particular. I know you will have questions on them, which I would be happy to answer, because that is the purpose of this meeting. But I thought, with your permission, Mr. Vice-Chairman, that I would like to seize this opportunity to bring you up to date on matters that might not be all that clear from a strict reading of the estimates, but that do reflect

important things happening at the assembly during this fiscal year.

The first item I want to talk about is the reorganization of the administrative structure of the Office of the Assembly, in which this committee has had a very important role to play since its inception in 1986. The reorganization was brought about by the will of this committee to have a say in the appointment of the new Clerk, which took place in September 1986, and that would have to be the starting point for the development of the new organizational structure.

The new organization is based on two principles, the first one being a balanced organizational chart divided into four main structures: The Clerk's office, the legislative library, the controller's office and the office of the executive director of assembly services. This main structure is now in place and I am happy to report it is working well.

The second basic principle is that these four components of the Office of the Assembly are brought together to work in a unified fashion, to serve the Board of Internal Economy, and of course the members of the assembly, more effectively. This has been brought about by the creation in the spring of 1988 of the management advisory committee, which now meets every week. It is chaired by the Clerk and brings together the director of the legislative library, the controller, the executive director of assembly services, and myself as well, to address all the major problems in the Office of the Assembly.

The committee then brings these matters to the attention of the board for a final solution, or at the direction of the board studies various matters and reports back to it. In the operation of this committee, it is expected each sector will bring its problems to the committee for general discussion and in that way, over time, the Office of the Assembly will develop a common spirit that should have a unifying effect and will permit the Office of the Assembly to give better and more meaningful service to the members.

It is hoped this new spirit will have all staff pushing in the same direction, with a common goal that can best be described as helping the Speaker and the board to provide an environment that will be the best suited to the business at hand,

which is the passing of legislation and service to the population.

The second major undertaking I want to underline is the signing this year of the memorandum of understanding, which you all have received in the mail, between myself and the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Patten), which in effect transfers control over the whole building and its grounds and the second floor of the Whitney Block to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. This is a major undertaking because it provides the opportunity, for the first time, to dedicate the use of this building to the business of parliament.

This is the instrument that will guide the way this building is used in the future. Basically, all the activities that took place in this building before will continue, but for the first time we will now have the opportunity to control those activities. From now on, such things as maintenance, housekeeping, parking, carpenter service, electricians, moving services and ushers, just to name a few, will continue to be provided by the staff of the Ministry of Government Services, but each one of those services will be controlled by a contract to be entered into with the ministry, in which we will ensure that the work being done is answering our needs and our basic requirements.

In order to do this, the executive director of assembly services, along with the management advisory committee, is presently going over the whole list of those services in order to determine exactly what our needs really are and prepare the necessary contracts that will guide the implementation of our requirements. I do not have to tell you that this cannot be done overnight, but we are very hopeful that by the end of this fiscal year, all of these contracts should be in place.

This agreement also provides for a new definition of the relationship with the Office of the Premier, the Cabinet Office and the Lieutenant Governor's suite as regards the space these people occupy within the parliamentary precinct. In the future, any expansion of their space requirements will be addressed by the Ministry of Government Services, outside of the parliamentary precinct per se. In addition, the memorandum of understanding also makes it clear that the government, and not the Office of the Assembly, is to furnish to those people those services that have no direct bearing on the maintenance of the space they presently occupy.

That, I think, gives you a little idea of what the Board of Internal Economy has been doing in the last while. I want to thank you for the opportunity

to put these matters before you, as I think and really believe they are important issues that have happened in this fiscal year. The 1988-89 estimates do not, in themselves, illustrate this new direction, so I thought it important to address them specifically.

I have asked a number of people to accompany me here today in order to better answer your questions. I will call on them by name as the questions are asked. I am sure they will gladly answer your questions as well.

As I close, let me take this opportunity to publicly say to my fellow members that they are indeed very fortunate to have at their service a complement of very dedicated and able people whose basic philosophy is that they are here to serve you in this parliamentary environment. I guess the common qualification is that they believe in the importance of what they are doing. For most of them, it is not just another job.

That is all I will say at the moment. I would like to make a request, though. I believe Mr. Linden has a flight to catch and I might make the suggestion that you might like to ask questions on freedom of information and election finances near the beginning, if that is possible. Thank you very much for your attention.

**The Vice-Chairman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Could I ask that Mr. Linden come forward. We can deal with that section of it first so that he might be able to get away to catch his flight. We all know that "time to spare, go by air" is important.

**Mr. Breagh:** I was going to make the suggestion that we will have Mr. Linden before us on several other occasions in the near future when we will be reviewing the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act itself. I would not mind foregoing questions to him this afternoon if it is more convenient for him. We can certainly have him back on another occasion when we can do that. If others have a question or two they would like to put to him, I would certainly be happy to yield.

**The Vice-Chairman:** Okay; I appreciate that. Mr. McCague.

**Mr. McCague:** Just one short question: You said the impact of the 1987 election was \$3.1 million. What was the cost of it?

**Mr. Linden:** I am sorry. Who would that question be directed at?

**The Vice-Chairman:** If I might, he is dealing with the information situation. We will be getting to the election finances.



**Mr. McCague:** Okay; sorry.

**The Vice-Chairman:** Any other comments for Mr. Linden?

**Mr. Linden:** I would like to take advantage of the opportunity just for a moment, if I may.

**The Vice-Chairman:** Please do.

**Mr. Linden:** I am grateful to you for giving me this opportunity to come and speak to you. I realize that I will have other opportunities to speak to you and I look forward to them and to answering your questions. This is the first time I have appeared before you and I was not sure exactly what to expect.

I just want to say very quickly, if I may, that we have come a long way in one year. I thought you might be happy to hear that. I was appointed almost exactly a year ago and I am sure the Clerk and the Speaker and some of the others here well remember those days. We had to hit the ground running, so to speak, having been officially appointed in November, with the act commencing in January.

But now, a year later, our office is established. It is well organized. We have had much more activity than we anticipated, but the office is running very well, as expected. I look forward to an opportunity soon to give you more details and more information about exactly how the office is organized and how it is running.

1550

**The Vice-Chairman:** We will then be calling you back at some point in the future. We will be happy to ask any questions dealing with that. I will make sure the chairman knows this is what we worked out so that you can make your travel arrangements. I thank you for being with us today.

**Mr. Linden:** Thank you very kindly.

**The Vice-Chairman:** Mr. Breagh, I have an undertaking that we will deal with your question in a moment. I still have you on the list. I just want to consult with the Speaker as to where we are going next.

Is there somebody from the Commission on Election Finances present? We moved along so fast. Everybody set their schedules, I guess, and we have moved a little earlier. Okay, here we go.

**The Vice-Chairman:** Mr. Kushner, for the benefit of Hansard, perhaps you could state your name and your position.

**Mr. Kushner:** I am Gordon Kushner. I am executive director of the Commission on Election Finances.

**The Vice-Chairman:** Mr. Breagh, do you have a question specifically?

**Mr. Breagh:** Yes, I just have one. We had a good go-around on several of these items with the chief electoral officer last week, who serves on the commission as well. I would just like to put you on notice that there are a number of us who are interested now in the concept of third-party intervention during the election, because we have just come through a federal election where this has begun to play a far more important role than it has in recent history in Canada.

We are aware of the trends in the United States during the election period whereby we could get ourselves in a rather ridiculous situation, where the political parties, theoretically the main players during the course of the election, are tightly regulated and caused to give pretty full disclosure, at least clearly identified as to who they are, and yet others may come into an election campaign, in particular, and spend a lot of money to promote one side of the argument or the other.

Mr. Bailie seemed to be of the opinion that the Canadian Constitution was somewhat different from the American Constitution in that there might be a way to offer some means of regulating, controlling, identifying and limiting the expenditures of money by other groups. I wonder if the commission has information along those lines that we should see prior to discussing any legislative changes that might occur. Do you have studies on it?

**Mr. Kushner:** I can respond to that in two parts. First off, the commission does have access to research material and has in fact compiled some. I believe every member of the House received our most recent publication, which is a compendium of election financing legislation in North America, Australia and New Zealand. Some information is contained in that document.

However, by coincidence, the commission met today as a matter of fact, and this is one of the topics that will receive priority in a retreat we have planned for late February, where the whole concept of third-party political action committee activity, or PAC activity, will be considered.

Similarly, I believe that in the federal milieu the same topic will be discussed. There have been some court cases, none conclusive and none at the Supreme Court of Canada, but that matter is being considered very seriously and there may be a recommendation for an amendment. As you can appreciate, the Commission on Election Finances is not empowered to do more than

recommend certain amendments to the assembly.

The committee as a whole will be considering that whole issue and will be making recommendations, certainly in time for the next provincial election. We will be discussing it at the retreat in February, I am sure.

**Mr. Breagh:** One of the things that perhaps we should get on the record this afternoon is that as a matter of fact, if things go as planned, this committee will put a recommendation to the assembly to review the election procedures. I think we have already given notice that part of what we will be looking at in our deliberations through public hearings, discussions and eventually legislative changes, will be some consideration of just exactly how you might go about regulating this.

We have seen some federal legislation, which is actually law now; but in the strange ways that laws work, it is a law that nobody wants to implement. We will have our own discussion and deliberations on that. I think it would be useful if both the legislative committee that is doing that process and your group, doing a similar process, would exchange information so that at least we do not wind up at cross purposes because we do not understand what the other group was doing.

By and large, what most of us are concerned about is that the political parties, for example, want to retain the right of freedom of speech as well. But we accept that there have to be some limitations on how much money you can spend for advertising and when and how you can do that, and that it is at least fair that the people of Canada know who is putting forward all of this information. Then they could perhaps make a judgement call as to whether it is accurate, reasonable or not so reasonable. As long as we have the lines clear, so that we can exchange information freely, I think that perhaps we will both get on doing our respective jobs on the matter.

**Mr. Kushner:** By way of comment, it is a personal objective of mine, but it is also the objective of the commission. We have now presented two sets of amendments to the Legislative Assembly and we do not want to see those lost and delayed before the next election. If there is anything the commission can do, either at the staff level or by representation from the commission, we are most anxious to appear before a legislative committee on that very matter. We have some amendments of a technical administrative nature, but we are also most anxious to participate on anything to do with

third-party advertising. We feel we have the expertise and the experience to advise the legislators on that very matter.

**Mr. Breagh:** For the benefit of other members who may not be familiar with this argument, this is a unique one. The commission has regularly reported to the assembly with changes to the act, some of which are by no one's standards argumentative, are quite sensible, straightforward wording amendments and minor changes. But there is no established vehicle for presenting these amendments to the assembly. So the committee has also taken that under its wing. We are looking for a method whereby the report from the commission and the changes to the act, which are essentially administrative in nature, can be presented in a nonpartisan way without threatening anybody. We hope we will have an easier way to do that, because the previous process did not work.

**Mr. Kushner:** We felt, exactly as you say, that the previous set of amendments sat there for approximately 10 years and nobody did anything about them. We would rather not see that situation happen.

**Mr. Breagh:** We are going to speed it up. It will not take more than eight.

**The Vice-Chairman:** Thank you. Mr. McCague, you had a question on this one, I believe.

**Mr. McCague:** I guess my question really was to the Speaker. I liked the choice of words in his statement when he said the impact of the election was \$3.1 million and I wanted to know what the cost was.

**Mr. Speaker:** The complete cost of the election? I do not know whether I can answer that or not.

**Mr. McCague:** Might I suggest to you that the impact was far greater and the cost may have been \$3.1 million?

**Mr. Speaker:** I get what you mean.

**Mr. Breagh:** Some guys are sore losers.

**Mr. McCague:** You are not prepared to answer that question, Mr. Speaker?

**Mr. Speaker:** Well, no. I suppose, being so impartial a Speaker, I do not really want to answer that.

**The Vice-Chairman:** Are there any other questions of Mr. Kushner? Thank you very much, Mr. Kushner. We look forward to some of the results of the comments you made.

**Mr. Breagh:** I do have several matters that I would like to get on the record. Probably the best way to proceed is to let me simply get them on the



record and then the Speaker can call whomever he chooses to respond.

**The Vice-Chairman:** That is fine.

**Mr. Breagh:** As the Speaker noted in his opening comments, for the first time since I have been a member here there is now almost a process established and we are on the verge of running our own house, so to speak. For the first time there is a precinct known as Queen's Park. It is identified. There is an agreement on how it should be managed and run. I think all of us are going to have to give way slightly, here and there, until this gets established and is fully operational. I do not want to be critical in any sense of the word, but I do want to put some concerns on the record that I hope you will address later on.

**1600**

One of the things that has never really happened here, to my knowledge, is any auditing of the procedures of the Legislative Assembly; any auditing of who spent what money, how it was spent, who was responsible for it, or anything of the kind. The Provincial Auditor, basically, has had lots to do with ministries and with agencies of the government but there has never been much in the way of the gathering up of actual expenditures of money here.

Now, with some caution, I would very much like to retain, for example, as much latitude for each of the caucuses and their expenditures as is possible. I do not think any one of us wants to sit down and tell the Conservative caucus or the Liberal caucus or the New Democrat caucus, how they should spend the moneys that they get.

But I am aware that things happen around here in wonderful ways. I think we do have a right to know when there are large expenditures of money, for example, to publish books. I always ask the question, "Who authorized the expenditure of money to publish that book?" I can never get an answer to that. I think I deserve an answer. I think when legislative staff time is put to work publishing a very thoughtful, resourceful, academic study of Canadian parliaments, there ought to be a clearly identifiable process which brings that about. So, when you ask the question, "Who authorized it?" somebody should have an answer. When you ask the question, "How much did it cost?" somebody should have an answer for that, too.

I am not arguing against that kind of activity. I am simply saying there ought to be a recognized way to do that. In my knowledge and experience here, there is not. I am a little upset from time to time with the way that money is spent around

here. Like most members, I see things happen in and around the building that confuse me. Why were things replaced that did not need to be replaced? Why when someone comes in to put a television set in my room, do they really have to deface all of the oak panelling that is in the room? Is it absolutely necessary that you staple the cables to oak panelling? I am not sure that it is.

I would be interested, as we set up our own administration here, in seeing that some auditing procedure is put in place. I recognize that the Provincial Auditor does not quite see this as his jurisdiction and that there are limits to it, and it is not going to be quite as simple as I would like to have it. For example, earlier this year the legislative dining room, and the catering service that is run out of it, came before us with the first set of numbers that I have ever seen on how that operation works. We discovered, among other things, that on the catering side, although they could incur expenses, they could not take in revenue simply because of the accounting procedure used—which is an interesting way to do business.

If we are to make a judgement call about whether we expand or contract the catering service the restaurant runs, we first of all better have a balance sheet. You should be able to incur expenses. That is fairly normal in any kind of business operation. But you should also be able to generate revenue. Someone else should not be able to come in and take the revenue side away.

I recall in that discussion, the porters in the press gallery wanted to know how come they got lumped into that. That is a good question. How come? They do not really have anything to do with the dining room. They were just grouped in that allocation. They are an information service as much as any other information service that is provided around here.

Other questions are, is it really our job to provide facilities for media people, to provide them with office space, studio space, anything else? Just exactly how do we set up those dividing lines between what the assembly has a responsibility for and what someone else who is in private sector business is responsible for. I am sure the Toronto Sun, among others, does not want to be subsidized by the taxpayers of Ontario and probably turns over in its grave that it is getting accommodation here and services here at Queen's Park, at public expense. I am sure we want to resolve that problem for them. All of which points me in the same general direction which is that I think it is appropriate that we design an auditing procedure for the assembly

itself. I know that there are some limitations there.

**The Vice-Chairman:** Mr. Breagh, I would hope that the demise of the Toronto Sun is—when you say, turning over in their grave—that it is premature.

**Mr. Breagh:** That was wishful thinking on my part.

**The Vice-Chairman:** Ah, that is what it was. I just wanted to share it on the record, Mr. Breagh.

**Mr. Breagh:** Another area that is of concern to me as we go through this setting up a structure is that, like many members, I am sure, people stop you in the hall who work around this building. They are cleaners, they are maintenance people, they are waiters, waitresses, cooks—a whole lot of people. A lot of them are rather uncertain about their future right now. Some worked for a ministry and belonged to a union and do not any more; some have been put on a contract basis. I understand, in a transitional period, some of this has to happen.

I am going to make a suggestion that is a little unusual, I know, but I think would be useful for us to do. I think it would be useful for the Speaker to get some people down from the Ontario Federation of Labour and simply say: “We have a little organizational problem here. We have some organized people who belong to a legitimate trade union in Ontario who are about to become members of our staff of the Legislative Assembly. We have others who have been employed in the building for some period of time and never have been able to join a trade union.”

We are going to have a union here; we know that. I think we would just alleviate some anxiety if we spoke with those who represent these people and said, “Could we find some common ground to do this in a rational way?” so that in this transition period, as we bring people in from Government Services and probably other ministries, we see that is done in a calm and reasonable way and are mindful that there are a lot of people who, frankly, are not very sure about their future.

The members are very sure about their future for another couple of years, but that is their problem. I am a little more concerned about people who have been long-term employees of the assembly or the Ministry of Government Services or some of the other ministries that are around, and I just think that it would make some sense if we facilitated that transition and saw that it was done in an orderly way and that for those people we have on a contract basis now, we gave them as much assurance as we can, that they are

not going to be used for two or three months and then dumped by the wayside. I know that there is some anxiety there, and I think it would be just good sense for us to try to alleviate that.

The third area that I wanted to cover is that I think we are going to have to be mindful that, in part, this place is nonpartisan and the Speaker can set up an administration on his own, but we are not going to get away from the idea that this is a political place. I do not think it is conceivable that you can write down a set of rules and regulations that the caucuses will live by and like. I think that you can establish budgetary limitations for them. You can say, “Here is how you do this” in a general way, but there is going to be a continuing conflict here between staff of the assembly who are not involved in partisan politics and those who are. We are going to have to design some organizational structures which at least acknowledge that fact.

I suppose it would be nice to think that we can lay out one way of doing things here, but it is not going to be possible, in my mind, unless we first address the issue that there will be a number of people here who work in a very partisan capacity. That is why they are here. They are part of the political process of Ontario, and I believe that to be legitimate and I have no qualms about the fact that they are here in that capacity, but we should make the careful distinction, as often as we can and as clearly as we can, between those who are employed here as employees of the assembly in a nonpartisan way and those who are here to assist the political parties in some capacity. We struggle with that a bit, but we do that sometimes and not others.

I am just saying that the time to do that is now. When there is at least a beginning of the setting up of the structure, there is an opportunity to do that thoughtfully, carefully and quietly.

The other option is that a political scandal will evolve and we will do it under the heat of politics. That is going to be a lot more difficult to do.

**1610**

There are just two other points I would like to make and then I will leave you alone. I have used the services of the legislative library quite a bit as a member and I really find them quite useful, but we have never had much in the way of a review of where the legislative library and its staff fit into the process around here. It could be the storage of records, it could be the use of staff or it could be the use of space. I think the time for us has come to take a look at where the library itself fits in the process here.



Most members, I think, would give you a good recommendation on the library services. When you need some help, whether that is research, getting straight information, or a newspaper that is sometimes difficult to get in Toronto, they are very good. I notice they have been able to respond to requests from each of the caucuses readily and provide us with daily information services, for example, on the Toronto press and the regional press. We have never really had much in the way of an overall review about where they fit in the process here. I think it would be useful for us to start to think about that.

**Mr. Daigeler:** May I ask a question on that?

**The Vice-Chairman:** Sure.

**Mr. Daigeler:** What do you mean by that? I do not quite understand.

**Mr. Breagh:** For example, last week the chief electoral officer was here. We were discussing the kind of records he keeps. We found the legislative library had used some of those records and done some reports on that: background on members, who got elected, who did not and all of that. It is a recurring question. For example, when we brought in the televising of the proceedings here, one of the questions was: Who keeps the tapes afterwards? Now they go to the archives. The library plays a role in that.

I think it is not quite clear to most members just exactly what the library does. For example, is it absolutely necessary that it be totally, physically within the precincts of the parliament? If you go up there, you will find it is pretty jammed. There is a space problem now and that problem is going to get worse. There are a number of sources who put information in there. There are a number of outside sources that the library itself uses for information purposes.

I am not proposing hiring a consultant to do this, but I think internally it would be useful for us just to see how the library fits into the whole process here at Queen's Park, from space allocation to the use of staff to who uses the information. It is not a public library in the normal sense of the word. It is a library there for the use of the assembly. I think it would be useful for us to go through that exercise.

The last thing I want to get on the record today, as the Speaker and other members of the committee will know, is that we have for some time been dealing with the matter of the restoration and renovation of the building. I just finish my little diatribe today by saying that I hope, finally, having cleared several hurdles, we give it the best shot we can to keep this building

and the environment at the Legislative Assembly in good shape.

I am not happy with the notion that every once in a while the roof falls in. I am not happy with the notion that every once in a while a large crowd gathers somewhere and the floor shakes. I would like to know that the roof is not going to fall in. I would like to be sure that people are not going to fall through the floor. I would like to know that finally someone will fix some of the back doors around here. I would like to know that at some point in the history of my life as a member here, a reasonable, sensible, secure building is in place, with a regular maintenance program that does some restoration of the building so that people can appreciate the history of the place, which is a little more functional than what it is now.

I think this is a resource for Ontario and one we ought to take care of. I know many members of this committee share that concept. I know the Speaker does. I know many of us are anxious to get on with a regular program of maintenance of the building and restoration of portions of the building so we have a facility that is useful to the people who work here and to the people of Ontario. The Speaker may want to make some comments himself on that later on. With those five items, I will leave you alone for a while.

**The Vice-Chairman:** The Speaker has made copious notes. If he wishes to respond to any or all of these at some point, I would like him to have the opportunity. Then when we have dealt with that, if there are other questions from members, I will take them in order.

**Mr. Speaker:** Your first point was on the auditing of the Legislative Assembly. You brought up a number of points that have concerned me in the past. I am not quite sure what you meant by books, but I have an idea what you are referring to. On some occasions, I tried to get a handle on it and found it most difficult. However, that is being published someplace else now.

I think the matter you raised regarding the care some of the workmen take around here will be looked after under our new organization, particularly with the committee that was approved by the House to look at renovation, I think we will start to get a handle on that type of thing. I know I have noticed it as I have gone around. Because the roof drains down through the walls of the building rather than over the edge, they come in with everything and pretty well tear things apart.

The restaurant balance sheet: Later on, Bill Ponick may wish to make a comment or two on

that. Facilities for media space: I guess the renovation committee will be looking at that. I think I will let Bill Ponick speak a little further on auditing procedures, if he so desires.

Your next comments were on staff around here. As I understand it from the memorandum of understanding, I cannot see in the very near future that any of the staff will be directly under the Office of the Assembly. The memorandum of understanding sets out very clearly that the ministry will deliver, as required by the assembly and as agent of the assembly, all the services set out in schedule A, which are really all those services you referred to. This will all be done by contract. As I stated in my opening remarks, I hope all those contracts are prepared and ready to go by the end of this fiscal year, so that we can budget for these items in our next annual budget.

The caucus budgets: You referred to the staff and felt they should be aware that there are 130 members around here served by those budgets and others. I find that being a member of the management advisory committee is one place where I have the opportunity, as an elected member, to remind the people on that committee. I am quite sure they have listened well and will continue to act in that manner in the future.

The review of the legislative library: I think I will leave that to Brian Land in a few minutes. It certainly makes sense. We all know what direction they are going in. I know they are before the Board of Internal Economy, but so that it is not just the board that is aware of which way they are going, I think that is a good suggestion.

As for restoration and renovation, I have had many tours of this building and I think a lot has to be done. I do not think we really want to make it into a museum. I think we want to maintain at least the outer shell and some parts of the building in their original state. I think we still all believe that this is the Legislative Building and that there are 130 members to serve. Being served within this building is really going to be the aim, hopefully, of all members in the House when a decision is made.

Does Bill Ponick want to make any comments on auditing?

1620

**The Vice-Chairman:** Mr. Ponick, please state your name and your position so that we have it straight for Hansard.

**Mr. Ponick:** My name is Bill Ponick, controller of the Legislative Assembly.

With respect to the audit question, in the assembly we have started a first step, I guess, towards ultimately having an audit function,

although we are not referring to it as an audit function at the moment; it is more of an evaluation function. We had seconded someone from the Solicitor General's office to start the process. That person will now be returning to the Solicitor General's office while we assess just what direction we want to take with that function. The decision has not been made yet, but I would see our seconding someone of a little different nature for that job to try to set the thing in motion for us.

I think there is a need for it within the assembly, although we do not have such large numbers or such a large budget compared to some of the ministries. It is better to get that on board now than wait until we are much larger and then have to scurry around to get something in place. I think that within the next year, if we second the right person, we should have a pretty good handle on the type of function we need and the person we need in the job.

It will primarily be only about a two-person office within the finance branch for now. I do not think we can break it off yet. Ideally, we would break it off as a little independent unit, not reporting to the finance director. Until we set it in place with the type of activity we want done there, we really cannot break it off. It is much too small. We need the assistance from others within in it.

Within the year, I think we will know just which direction we are going in on that one. They will then be looking into some of the things you referred to and doing a routine evaluation of various aspects of assembly administration. That really is a revolving thing. We will finish one area and move on to another. In between, they can do any special projects we require. That is all I have to say about the audit function.

**The Vice-Chairman:** Before we proceed, if you would not mind, please stay here because there may be questions along the line of the controller's role that we could address at this time while you are sitting there. We could deal with that. Mr. Speaker had a couple of comments.

**Mr. Speaker:** I just wonder if Mr. Breaugh has any questions. He made particular reference to the restaurant and the balance sheet.

**Mr. Breaugh:** Just to pursue this a little, what is now called the balance sheet is the first record of any kind I have ever seen about the restaurant operation. It pointed out some obvious flaws in the system. I am not sure we need a full-fledged internal auditor here, but I do know this: There is a Manual of Administration that has three huge volumes. I have a copy, but I will bet very few



other members do. I will bet there is no one in his right mind in this world who has ever read the damned thing, let alone used it.

The order paper is full of questions from members asking: "What ever happened to my desk that I ordered a year ago? Why is it somebody has to deliver a chair to an office three times so that the delivery costs are going to be much higher than that of the chair itself?"

There is a need to do some kind of auditing process here. For example, this committee was told last year at about this time, regarding food services in the building, that we could not keep the main restaurant downstairs open in the evening for the members, but that if we closed it as a restaurant and opened up the kitchen and that area as a catering business, because there were lots of receptions and meetings going on here, it would be quite profitable.

If somebody had bothered to tell us that all you can do is run up an expense under this accounting system and that you cannot take in any revenue, even I would have been able to tell them that they were going to have a tough time making money, if they could just pay bills and could not take in revenue. I got that much down.

There is a need to do a bit of an auditing process, whether or not that involves designating a committee of the Legislature to do processes like that. Those of us who come from the municipal field, for example, know that if you want an answer to a question in municipal politics, it is actually possible to get one. At Queen's Park, it is possible to get six tons of paper, but it is really tough to get an actual answer to a question such as, "Where is my desk?" Things like that seem to baffle the whole process here.

I would like some way of knowing, in case you want to know why Allan McLean cannot figure out where his desk is. How many light-years will it take to figure that out? There should be some kind of auditing process that identifies what the problem is.

As I recall, a year ago—maybe two years ago—I asked the interesting question, "Where is my desk?" The Speaker was here and the director of administration was here. I asked the question about six times. Finally, somebody admitted that the desk had arrived, but had fallen off the truck because we did not have a loading area here. It was smashed. That desk was discontinued. Eventually, I got a desk. Thank you, everybody who was involved in that.

When you ask the simple questions here, it seems no one has answers. I think some of it

deserves an answer. Whether the auditing function is formal, with a person designated to do that on a full-time basis, or is someone whose role in life is to find lost furniture, I think it would be useful.

**Mr. Ponick:** There are two different thoughts there. One is the audit. The audit function really cannot be expected to follow up that sort of thing. But what I would say to you on such matters as, for instance, that desk—I know there are other cases like that—is that we are undertaking now to study these processes within the administration. I myself have been a little puzzled by the length of time a particular item takes to arrive. Of course, there are explanations for it, but we should be able to come up with some way of expediting that, following it up and simply putting a deadline on when a supplier must deliver it.

Some of these things have not been present intentionally; it is just the process. I think we will make some headway on that within the next year. This is not to take away from the audit function. When the auditor comes in, he will probably look at that sort of thing, but that is really not his primary object.

Work is being done there. We are slowly reorganizing the staff. This will take some time, but we will then be set up in such a way that we can provide follow-up and be able to account to people for where their order is, or for what is happening on any matter. Right now, we do not have a firm handle on these things. We have been deflected into other things too much. We have to get back to the basics very quickly.

You mentioned the Manual of Administration. For my office, we have undertaken to start reviewing it.

**Mr. Breagh:** Good luck.

**Mr. Ponick:** My aim is to reduce it from three to one. I hope we can do that. I do not mean three small ones to one big one; just one reasonable manual. I think it can be done. I have been through it, albeit with a cursory run-through. I think there is some redundancy in there. There are things we really do not need in there. Hopefully, we will bring it down to one volume, which might then give us a chance to believe that people will look at it. I have always felt that the greater the number of volumes, the lesser the chance of anyone looking at them, because it is confusing. I found it that way when I came in.

We are working on that. We are also revising the members' guidebook or handbook, the little maroon book that has not been updated for a couple of years. We are now in the process of doing that. You will be pleased to know it is also

going to be bilingual this time around. That should be available early in the New Year and then it will be done annually, on a regular basis.

There are things in place now. We are trying to get the ball rolling so that we can maintain things as they should be and we should be able to give answers to anyone who asks.

1630

**Mr. Speaker:** I noticed Mr. Breagh's questions covered a number of areas. We have Barbara Speakman, executive director of assembly services, here. She might like to come up in case there are any other questions.

**The Vice-Chairman:** I think there might be some questions along this line. I know they have been voiced to me. Perhaps I might lead off on some of these questions. As a former municipal politician, I got used to the idea of asking questions—I am on the government side, so you can feel it is not unique to the opposition or the third party—and getting somewhat obtuse answers. I do not know that is generally the case here. When you come from Sudbury to Toronto, you may expect a level of sophistication in all the institutions. Maybe that is a fallacy some people have.

**Mr. Breagh:** It is a fallacy perpetuated by the northern members.

**The Vice-Chairman:** I will tell you something. When I walked into the legislative dining room the first day and pulled out my plastic and tried to use it, I was told, "We only handle cash." I said that is fine, except I remember going to lunch or dinner with a former member I am very close to. She was signing something and I saw there was no money changing hands, so there must have been a system. I did find out that they finished the system on transition because of a few problems with collecting.

At the same time, they did not replace it with anything that was convenient for some of the members. I hope that will be addressed because it seems very archaic, when you take guests out in this increasingly cashless society, that you cannot pull out your plastic and use it. Even understanding how plastic works—the merchants get charged a commission of four per cent or whatever it is now—you might still raise your prices to cover the cost. Anyway, I am sure you have the answer to that. There are others, I am sure, who would like to jump in at some point. We can start there anyway.

**Mrs. Speakman:** Perhaps I can talk about two things: first, the questions relating to the dining room, and second, the questions that really relate

to the memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Government Services and what we are doing there to implement that process.

First of all, the dining room: There is one thing you said, Mr. Breagh, that is not totally correct, although it is partially correct. In the catering area, we do take in revenue and it is credited to our balance sheet. However, at the end of last year, and perhaps this is what you were referring to, there were a number of billings that were not collected until after year-end and that portion went into the consolidated revenue fund. This will happen every year. What we are doing there is working on a new balance sheet to indicate the credit so that the bookkeeping is appropriate and you can see the total sales against the total costs. The deficit was not in fact as high as the first printout that you saw indicated.

The second thing that was talked about is the issue of credit cards. As a result of the review that was done by Mr. Ponick's group, we are going through all the detailed recommendations that were made by that group and are providing a response to each of those. The response will be either that we agree and we have done it, that we would like to do but it is going to take some time and here is when it will be done, that we like the idea but it is really not practical in this situation and here is the reason why, and the fourth category, that it would be very nice and it is a good idea but we really must talk to the members about it.

There are those four categories of response. Those are almost ready for distribution to the board for review and to the members who have expressed interest, who are the members of this committee, so that you can look at those aspects that directly impact on you.

Specifically, the issue of credit cards is a very interesting one. Since we are more in the business of providing a service than we are in the business of running a profitable business, every one of these features or services we provide may or may not be able to be provided on a cost-beneficial basis. Sometimes we can provide a service and it costs us money and everyone says, "That's fine, we want the service anyway." Other services we can provide, charge enough to cover the cost and again everyone is happy.

With credit cards, there is a cost. There is a cost associated with the banking aspects of them and so on. We have looked at a number of options. Really, we felt the essence of the problem was to enable you to go into the dining room as a member and charge it somehow. An easier way of doing it is to have a card for the



members for the dining room. That is one way. We do not get into all the accounting processes with banks and that kind of thing.

That question will be responded to in the report and you will be provided with the options and the potential costs of each option, so it is being addressed.

Was there anything else on the dining room? I think that was about it. I just wanted to indicate that we are completing that response now.

**The Vice-Chairman:** I understand that there may be questions beyond that. I have raised one issue just to get the ball rolling, so to speak, but there may be other issues dealing with either one of these areas. If not, we will move on to the next item.

**Mr. Breagh:** Let me do just a quickie. This is part of our problem here. Mrs. Speakman has a good understanding of how government works, but there is nobody else in this world who would open up a pop stand who could not figure out how to get a Chargex and a MasterCard system going. We have been in business here for almost 100 years and we still have not figured out not only how to do it but what the choices are.

We have a problem in that regard. I appreciate that this is not going to run like a business, but I would put on the record this afternoon that I do not think there is any need to subsidize the members or the people who work in this building in any way, shape or form. I know there are traditions, and that is something I always respect, but I do not think we need to always consider that the subsidization of anything is necessary.

People here have legitimate expenditures that they can run up against their office costs. I think that is kosher, but I would just like that little thing taken out of the mix. I do not think it is necessary.

**The Vice-Chairman:** I think there is a bit of a concern when you do provide a service and subsidize it or not subsidize it. Previously, at least there was some way of dealing with that, and that is the signing of the chits or whatever it was as part of that thing. When that was removed, for whatever reason, all I am pointing out is that part of that service situation fell out.

If you are running a business that may or may not be in a city hall, for example—I know in our city hall we have a restaurant. It is not part of our situation, but because of late meetings they provide a catering service and that sort of thing, but it was not subsidized. I am a little bit concerned when I see this kind of thing.

You have a barbershop, but it implies that only male members can use that and female members of the Legislature would probably not use that

service. You probably are going to have to address those kinds of things at some point, and it is probably because those kinds of things have been traditional, but some traditions, with the change of society's views, have to change.

It is just those kinds of things I point out by illustration. There are other speakers. I will not monopolize the time.

**Mrs. Speakman:** Can I just respond to that question of the deficit and subsidization? I guess that is one of the core elements of the whole thrust of the evaluation, and that will be one of the questions that I think has to be addressed: "Are we going to continue to subsidize or are we not? What business are we in?"

One of the key elements of our deficit is in fact the wages that we pay, which are good, fair wages based on government rates and not based on industry rates. I accompanied some members who are here today to Quebec and Ottawa. In Quebec they have very successfully reduced their deficit this year, but one of the ways in which they did it was to legislate a lowering of their rates of pay. That was one element of that reduction.

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I think we have to address all of those issues very carefully as a group before we make a decision that it is a service and subsidize or it is not and we have to raise prices and bring in money. That will unfold with the responses to the report. There will be a lot of opportunity to debate those issues.

We looked in Ottawa—at least I did—at the question of the barbershop and the service. There again, they have a male-and-female operation. It is subsidized quite heavily as a service to the members. We have lots of illustrations in other jurisdictions of how they handle credit cards and so on. I think we can come to a fairly speedy conclusion on all of those.

**The Vice-Chairman:** We look forward to the report. I have a number of members who wish to speak.

**Mr. Matrundola:** I was looking at the estimates here. Are the employee benefits equal for everyone in the different departments, whether it is administration, the Commission on Election Finances, members' support services, caucus support services and so forth? Are the employee benefits more or less equal, whatever the department, or do they vary from department to department?

**Mr. Speaker:** To my knowledge, they are all equal.

**Mr. Ponick:** To my knowledge, everyone is entitled to the same benefits. I have Ellen Schoenberger here from human resources.

**Mr. Matrundola:** I am not an accountant, but simple mathematics shows me that generally they vary from about 11.95 per cent of the salaries and wages to about 14 per cent. There are different numbers here, from 11.95 per cent for Office of the Clerk, to about 14 per cent for members' support services or for the broadcast and recording service. I will try it again on the calculator. I do not know whether I made a mistake or if I know what I am talking about here, but I would like to have an explanation.

I see that the members' indemnities employee benefit is about 4.5 per cent and caucus support services is 27.8 per cent. I do not know whether it is a mistake or whether it is proper. I do not know. I would like to have an explanation, please.

**The Vice-Chairman:** First, could I have your name, rank and serial number for Hansard, please?

**Ms. Schoenberger:** I am Ellen Schoenberger, director of human resources.

I think I know what you are talking about. The short answer to the first question is yes, the employees all fall under the same benefit plan. They are connected to the government's benefit plan. It is the same benefits for everybody.

There are slight differences for the caucuses. They have almost the same benefit plans, with the exception of vacation and short-term sickness. When it comes to all other health plans, they are the same. The reason you see different percentages there, if you figure it out, is in the makeup of each branch. Some branches have more contract people than others. When you are on contract, you do not receive the same benefits. You receive Ontario health insurance plan benefits after three months and an accumulated credit for vacation. So the benefit average for contract staff is lower than 14.25 per cent, which is the average for other employees.

Also, if a branch has a large contingent of students—for example, in my branch I have all of the co-op students under me, so my benefits look lower than the 14.25 per cent; that is because all of the students come under my branch as well. That would explain the differences.

**Mr. Matrundola:** That is, in general, between 11.95 per cent and 14 per cent?

**Ms. Schoenberger:** Yes.

**Mr. Matrundola:** Could you kindly tell me why, for example, in members' indemnities it is

4.5 per cent and the caucus support services is 27.8 per cent?

**Ms. Schoenberger:** I do not make up those figures for the members' indemnities and the caucuses. Maybe Terry Mitchell can answer that question. He is the budget man. I do not understand.

**Mr. Matrundola:** I am sorry if I ask too many questions, but I think I ask questions that are important.

**The Vice-Chairman:** No, no. That was not the point. Obviously, all of these questions are important. I was just making the comment that with all these people in the audience, we should get them all up and get their name, rank and serial number for Hansard. Then we know who we are talking to every time and we do not have to interrupt.

Gino, I do respect the fact that you are asking a question. If they need help, obviously to deal with specifics, they should have it.

**Mr. Ponick:** Mr. Mitchell is not able to respond to that one at the moment. We would have to take a look into it. We just do not have a ready answer. I do not, unless Ellen can answer it.

**Ms. Schoenberger:** Something comes to my mind. One of the differences in members' indemnities is likely that we do not provide for vacation payment for members, for example, but when it comes to health and pension benefits—well, pension benefits are different again—the health benefits for members are exactly the same as for all government employees. We would not calculate, of course, vacation benefits for members, nor is there a short-term sickness plan for members. They are simply members and they get paid as members whether they are here or not.

**The Vice-Chairman:** I am very happy to confirm, for all the people out there who are watching on TV, that MPPs do not get holidays, at least not provided by Ontario.

**Mr. Matrundola:** What I am happy to notice is that the members' indemnities, the employees' benefit, at 4.5 per cent is the lowest of every other category. Of course, I would have been very upset if it was the other way around, if we had 27.8 per cent and the rest had 4.5 per cent or 12 per cent. At least we, as elected members, at 4.5 per cent are at the lowest. I believe that will somewhat alleviate any problem. I would like to know the difference in the future, if possible.

**Ms. Schoenberger:** We can certainly give you that information.



**Mr. Matrondola:** Thank you. I appreciate it.

**The Vice-Chairman:** Perhaps at a future point we can come back to that.

**Mr. Morin:** I have a question to Mr. Ponick. I want to thank you for implementing the recommendation we made to you and your staff to bring in an expense account advance or whatever term you use. I have used it and it works out beautifully. Has it been a very successful recommendation?

**Mr. Ponick:** We were rather surprised at the response when we sent the questionnaire around. We were expecting an avalanche of responses; in fact, we got only 15.

**Mr. Morin:** Only 15?

**Mr. Ponick:** Two or three might have come in after that.

**Mr. Morin:** Are they from northern Ontario, eastern Ontario?

**Mr. Ponick:** No, there were some from other areas as well.

**Mr. Breaugh:** Our entire eastern Ontario caucus replied.

**Mr. Morin:** Did it? Then I am even more surprised.

**Mr. Ponick:** The amounts were as we had asked. They do correspond to their monthly average expenditure. The lowest one I had was a \$100 request, and I think the highest was just over \$2,000.

**Mr. Morin:** Is it because the purpose is not well understood?

**Mr. Ponick:** No. We have had very few questions, actually.

**Mr. Morin:** Would it be wise to send another memo just to inform them what the program is all about? I am sure you would have found more clients, because when it comes time to pay your bills and you are at a point where you are financing the government, it is all right to be kind, but—

**Mr. Ponick:** We were looking to see who asked for the advance and then to see if the others were complaining at all about their costs not getting reimbursed on time. We have not had anything like that.

**Mr. Morin:** I think of people living in northern Ontario, where their bills for flying are extremely high; the same as ours, for instance, living in Ottawa. You know we have to travel back and forth.

**Mr. Ponick:** I cannot speak to this directly, but I think the northern Ontario members did come in for the advances.

**The Vice-Chairman:** If I might, just to clarify that, there are two issues there. I think every member of our caucus from northern Ontario did apply for varying amounts. Again, I guess I am used to Civic Square. When they put up a standing advance for travel to southern Ontario, it was on an ongoing basis. Then, when the paperwork got done, you got the balance or you remitted the balance. That was a little confusing.

I know two other members of the northern Ontario caucus felt the same way and probably would have applied for a higher amount, given that it was closer to the monthly expenses. When you go through \$2,000 and \$3,000 a month just as expenses and you subsidize for nine to 15 days, it does add up. It is amazing how quickly it does add up if you are not used to it.

**Mr. Morin:** I am very surprised it is only 15 people.

**The Vice-Chairman:** It was a very successful program, though, for the people who needed it and could use it.

**Mr. Ponick:** Coincidentally, we also have taken steps to speed up the payment of expenses.

**The Vice-Chairman:** That is absolutely true.

**Mr. Ponick:** That was really, I guess, one of the things that triggered the whole thing.

**Mr. Morin:** So they now have two options instead of one. You have improved your system and therefore the advance was not necessary.

1650

**Mr. Ponick:** We have taken a bit of the edge off the proposal.

**The Vice-Chairman:** By the way, that may be why you had only 15 responses.

**Mr. Ponick:** It could be.

**The Vice-Chairman:** I think that is true.

**Mr. Morin:** So you need two compliments there, not only one.

**Mr. Fleet:** There was mention earlier—I think Mr. Breaugh mentioned it—about lumping in the media area with the dining room. I am not quite sure what analogy was made to come to that conclusion, if they are just leftovers or whatever. What bills do we send to media outfits for the services that are provided?

**Mrs. Speakman:** There is a press gallery, as you know. There are two stewards associated with that press gallery and they are on the staff of the dining room. Therefore, the cost of those two salaries is attributed to the dining room. Actually, we should use the proper term: it is food and beverage services, because there is a dining

room, catering and a cafeteria. As well as that, we have the press gallery.

All of the expenditures and the income are grouped and lumped together under one large balance sheet. That is one of the recommendations that I am making to Mr. Ponick's staff, that we begin to separate that out so that we can effectively look at the business case for each of those areas, for the dining room, catering, the cafeteria and the press gallery. The allusion that Mr. Breaugh made to the lumping-in there in terms of messenger services in addition to their duties as stewards in the press gallery, those two individuals also distribute press releases. They do quite a bit of running around the building distributing those.

As well as looking at their responsibilities and the costs of those responsibilities to the food and beverage service, we are also at the same time now looking at those messenger services with respect to the press gallery and also all of the other messenger services in the building, because there are a number of them. Some come under the memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Government Services. As you know, we have legislative attendants who are part of our own Office of the Assembly organization.

So what we are trying to do is rationalize all of those services and determine where the accountability is, what responsibility in each of those areas has to be performed and who foots the bill in terms of cost accounting. I think that is the one that is a little bit of an anomaly in that it is half beverage service to the press gallery and half messenger service also. So we will rationalize that.

**Mr. Fleet:** Right now, do we bill anybody for those services?

**Mrs. Speakman:** In the press gallery?

**Mr. Fleet:** Yes.

**Mrs. Speakman:** No, we do not bill for the salaries. It is part of the service provided to the press, along with space and so on.

**Mr. Fleet:** What discussions, if any, have been held with the press gallery about getting its operations to pay for the services it uses?

**Mrs. Speakman:** I have had none, but I do not know if anything happened prior to my arrival.

**Mr. Speaker:** I have certainly had none, and the Board of Internal Economy has had none.

**Mr. Fleet:** I, for one, think it might be a really useful thing if those discussions were entered into. I cannot see why we would not. They are there making their profits—at least the companies are—and I cannot see why there would not be a

fair contribution made for whatever services are provided, at least for salaries and what not. I guess we are not going to ask them to help pay for the whole building; but for those sorts of services, I would think that is a reasonable thing to take up with them.

**Mr. Speaker:** That is a suggestion I would certainly be willing to take back to the board.

**Mr. Morin:** Where does security fall under the estimates; the security employees?

**Mr. Speaker:** The security employees are employees of the Solicitor General.

**Mr. Morin:** Okay. I wanted to ask you, Mr. Speaker, about the incident that happened in the House. Is the report due pretty soon?

**Mr. Speaker:** According to the Legislative Assembly Act, I am responsible for security, so after the incident, I made an inquiry. I have received a report. I have met with the Solicitor General (Mrs. Smith) and I have met with the deputy commissioner and other representatives of the police. We are now discussing some suggestions, and I am hoping, as I requested from your chairman, that there will be some suggestions from this committee as well, so that I can put together some suggestions for the members.

**The Vice-Chairman:** All right. We are moving along fairly well.

**Mr. Speaker:** There is one other thing that Mr. Breaugh asked about the library. He asked whether there is any sort of ongoing study to make any improvements to the library. I just wonder if Mr. Land would like to respond.

**The Vice-Chairman:** I wanted to make sure we had covered all the ground that these good folks had dealt with, if there were other questions dealing with this aspect. Did you have a comment to make back?

**Mrs. Speakman:** I think there is one more you raised in terms of the memorandum of understanding on the staff that I would like to respond to as well.

**The Vice-Chairman:** Please do.

**Mrs. Speakman:** Do you want me to do that now?

**The Vice-Chairman:** If you are prepared to, sure.

**Mrs. Speakman:** I think one of the words that we have been using, perhaps indiscriminately, is the word "contract." That has a number of different connotations. I would just like to clarify the relationship that we have with the various staff in the building.



Under the memorandum of understanding, the staff of the Ministry of Government Services remain the staff of the Ministry of Government Services. They have two types of staff. One is regular, permanent civil servants who are members of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union. There are also a number of contract staff for short-term contracts, sometimes in the cleaning area, sometimes in the maintenance area and so on. Those are short-term contracts, and I believe that under the collective agreement they are also covered by OPSEU.

When we refer to the Ministry of Government Services operating under service contracts, what we are really talking about are operating agreements that we are trying to develop for each of the services. That does not change the nature of the relationship of MGS with its employees.

You also referred to staff in the cafeteria, dining room and so on. Those are Legislative Assembly staff and they are not unionized. They are not represented by OPSEU or anything like that. So we have different types of staff within the building.

What I wanted to clarify was that the memorandum of understanding has not changed the relationship between MGS and its staff. They are still unionized staff and they are still members of OPSEU, and nothing changes. They are not coming on to the Legislative Assembly staff.

**Mr. Breagh:** If I could just pursue that point for a minute, I am going to make the plea, because I do not think it is fair to have someone who is cleaning the hall belong to a bargaining unit, have the right to grieve and a whole lot of other rights that someone who is serving in the dining room does not have. I think that conflict is going to grow and I think we are going to encounter problems with that sooner or later.

My preference is to deal with it sooner and to deal with it in an organized, rational way. I am simply making the plea that I am aware that that problem is here right now. The problems are going to get worse instead of getting better, and we should address that question and do it in a fairly logical and thoughtful way before we have the other route to deal with.

**Mr. Speaker:** I hear you loud and clear. We will make note of it and review it at the committee.

**The Acting Chairman (Mr. Morin):** Are there any further questions on this issue?

**Mr. Breagh:** I have one left for Bill Ponick, because he has had too easy a time here today.

I still cannot explain to my family, the chief treasurer in particular, exactly what I have been

paid for and what I have not been paid for. When you are thinking of improvements to be made in the system, one of the things is that when you pay us back for expenses or payments for committee work or for per diems, that is still very confusing to me and, I must sadly report, to a number of people in my caucus who have been unable to explain to their local treasurers just exactly whether they have or have not been paid for committee work that they did in the summer. We have a continuing problem there.

**Mr. Ponick:** I will look into that one, because there should be an explanation on the cheque itself.

1700

**Mr. Breagh:** That is the problem. There is not very much in the way of an explanation there. There is an amount, and you can make a good guess at what you are being paid for, but you are never quite sure, and God forbid you should be fool enough to phone up and ask.

**Mr. Ponick:** We are working on that one. We are going to get that one resolved as quickly as possible. It is a problem for us in tracking anything through the system that we just cannot readily put our hands on a document and give someone an answer. That is one of the things I have already addressed with the new director of finance and he will be addressing it himself as soon as he is back.

**Mr. Breagh:** Just to conclude, part of our problem here is that we do have a tradition where we try to make sure that no member ever takes advantage of the system. I am generally an advocate of that, but I am aware at the same time that we spend a lot of staff time and money on making sure that somebody does not get an extra dime somewhere. Maybe when we are looking at reviewing the way we reimburse people for expenses, we might bear that in mind, because there is sure a lot of paper.

For example, I actually got an explanation for expenses that were incurred in August, I think it was. They gave me the complete list. On the complete list was my having dinner twice the same evening at different places. I do a lot of things, but I do not normally do that. I just think that our little system of reimbursing people for expenses is not quite perfect yet.

**Mr. Ponick:** There are two things there. One is the old adage about buying a sledgehammer to kill a fly, and we have been guilty of that, to a certain degree, in the past.

That little problem you are talking about, the dinners on the same date, if you have charged it

on a credit card, quite often the establishments do not change the date when they are supposed to. I have had that same problem where I have had two bills for the same date and I know I was not at both places. That happens quite frequently. I guess, in our zeal, we did not spot that sort of thing happening.

**Mr. Breagh:** Take my word for it, I did not eat dinner at Foxy's twice in the same night.

**The Acting Chairman:** Mr. Breagh, I believe you had raised a question concerning the library. Perhaps Mr. Land would like to make some comments.

**Mr. Land:** I was recalling, when Mr. Breagh was making his comments, and for the benefit of the newer members of the committee, that in the 1970s, the government of the day set up the Ontario Commission on the Legislature, the Camp commission. One of the studies of the commission was of the Legislative Assembly, the Office of the Assembly, and one of the aspects of that study was the legislative library and its role.

The House committee that addressed the commission report felt it was necessary to have a more in-depth study of the role of the legislative library, so it commissioned such a study from the librarian of Parliament, Erik Spicer. He did indeed report and that study was published. In fact, it was as a result of that study that I came to Queen's Park, because it created the position in 1978 which I currently occupy.

Other directions in that study were to recommend that there be a research service established and that the library collection be thoroughly examined with a view to withdrawing material that was either outdated or inappropriate. There were many others. In fact, there were 31 recommendations, all of which have been acted on in whole or in part.

The library is required by the standing orders of the assembly to make an annual report, which we do. I would simply say that I have no objection at all to a review of the role of the library. In fact, one of the concerns the management advisory committee will be looking at, I hope, is the issue of records management, which I think relates to the whole Office of the Assembly: What are we going to do with our records in whatever form? Right on the horizon is the prospect of other formats than the traditional, compact disc storage and so on, so there are a number of things that have posed and continue to pose some questions for us.

I have nothing further, unless you have other questions or observations.

**Mr. Breagh:** It is just that it has been, I think, almost two decades since the Camp commission.

**Mr. Land:** It has been 10 years since the report.

**Mr. Breagh:** It has been a while, and the assembly itself has changed a great deal and the resources available to members have certainly changed a lot. I just think it would be useful for us to review what role the members have in terms of expectations from the library and what problems the library has. There are some obvious ones around space and storage and staff and things of that nature. I think it would be useful to take a look at that again.

**The Vice-Chairman:** Is there any other area with the library or with the accounting and services office that any members have questions on now? Okay, thank you very much. We will proceed to the next area. Are there any questions that anybody has on any other items that we have not covered to this point?

**Mr. Breagh:** There is one other area where I notice again we are into the same problem that I talked about earlier. I know that here and in other jurisdictions, we always struggle with the idea of separating partisan politics from a kind of—I cannot believe that we still delude ourselves into thinking that this is not a political forum. It is, and in everything we do there is politics.

For example, I have a letter on my desk—I think the Speaker sent it out—reminding members that their constituency newsletters are not to be political in nature. I do not know how you do that. If I put out a letter to my constituents, my face is on it, my name is there. Maybe we are talking about tasteful politics as opposed to not-so-tasteful politics. Mine is always a very tasteful, statesmanlike rendition of what is happening at Queen's Park.

**The Vice-Chairman:** But the picture sometimes leaves a lot to be desired. Is that what you are saying?

**Mr. Breagh:** No. You must be talking about your pictures. My pictures are tasteful.

**The Vice-Chairman:** No. I definitely am not talking about my pictures.

**Mr. Breagh:** You see, that is the heart of the problem. I appreciate that we have had a number of points of privilege and things raised where members of the assembly thought that somebody else's newsletter was not appropriate, that he had his picture taken with somebody who was running for municipal office or something like that.



I know that in other jurisdictions—I follow New York state politics a bit, for example—they are for ever having investigations over some staff person who actually went back to a member's constituency and did some work. There is a constant flow of allegations that nonpartisan staff were doing partisan, political things.

I do not know whether it is useful to pursue this very much, but it always rubs me the wrong way. I know that sometimes people will do stupid things here, and I am generally against people doing stupid things, but it does not help when the rest of us go around and make some kind of an argument that—when the Premier (Mr. Peterson) visits a riding, that is a partisan event, and we can say that he is very statesmanlike, that there were no politics there, but I also know that the other side of it is how hard government members work to get the Premier to visit their ridings.

**The Vice-Chairman:** He is a very popular person.

**Mr. Breagh:** Yes, he is a very popular guy. It is only temporary, but he is.

**The Vice-Chairman:** He is not only temporary.

**Mr. Breagh:** Well, I can think of one place where he is not so popular.

**The Vice-Chairman:** Longevity in the term will be there, I think.

**Mr. Breagh:** I will tell you what I think might be useful, though, at some point in time. I am not sure exactly who should do this. It would be nice if we had a little bit of protocol developed as to how these things are handled. I am thinking basically of the member for Carleton (Mr. Sterling), for example, who was all upset because he did not get invited to lunch.

1710

**Mr. Morin:** There is a story behind that.

**Mr. Breagh:** Yes, there is a story behind all of this, but the fact is that we do not have much in the way of a protocol developed as to how that would be done. It might just be useful if somebody sat down and said: "When the Premier visits a riding, here is how the invitations will be handled. If you want to figure out how it is done, look it up in the book and the book will tell you." It would be kind of like a protocol book. It might be useful if we did something similar for other publications that members put out.

I am at a loss to explain, for example, if you do not like members—I do not think anybody should say, for example: "Here are two wonderful people who are running for municipal politics in Sudbury and I think they are great people. Vote

for them." I think that is wrong. But it does not take very much brains for the member for Sudbury (Mr. Campbell) to just accidentally have his picture taken with two of his friends who just happen to be running for local public office. All he has to do is refrain from being stupid enough to say: "Vote for these people." He can say: "Here they are working hard in my community and here is who they are."

However you want to devise your rules for letters or newsletters to constituents, whether it is legal to send Christmas cards to people or notes to people, I do not know how you would stop that kind of stuff unless you are prepared to put somebody downstairs in the post office who opens up every letter that goes out of Queen's Park to the constituency back home.

There is some of that I think is not very useful, although we get caught in it all the time. There is some more of it where it might be helpful if there was just a little bit of protocol developed. To my knowledge, that really has not been done.

Sometimes the Premier will invite the local member to attend. Sometimes he will send a government member into a riding to hand out a cheque. Sometimes an opposition member will go into a riding, and even though I do not have the cheque, I do not need a lot of instructions to hand somebody a piece of paper and tell them that the cheque is in the mail and we will do the local press photo that way. It might be useful and stop some silly arguments if at some point in time we did a little bit of a protocol guideline on how to do these things and if we all tried to adhere to that.

**The Vice-Chairman:** This issue has been before the Board of Internal Economy, I expect, and some decisions have been made, i.e. Christmas card postage rather than Christmas cards being paid for. Some of those issues have been addressed, but perhaps the Speaker would like to expand on that.

**Mr. Speaker:** Yes, I could maybe just make a comment or two on that. First of all, I will not make any comment on your suggestions that some things are political outs, functions outside this building, because, of course, the Office of the Assembly has jurisdiction mainly for this building and the constituency offices only.

The problem I have with the comments you made about some sort of protocol guidelines is that I am not a great believer in too many guidelines, because the minute you make guidelines, somebody is going to try to get around them. I guess that is generally how I try to run the

House, with a little more common sense than too many guidelines.

The matters you referred to were brought up in the House. I did say that I would take them to the board. The letter that you received was the decision of the board. They felt that we should not police it too hard and, as you say, go down and have somebody there opening every letter to see whether it was political or not. What we were trying to do was just remind the members that they use common sense.

If I may, I will give you an example, if I can, in these surroundings, of my constituency office during an election time. If somebody phones my constituency, my constituency assistants will have the numbers of all the political campaign offices in front of them, and if it is a question regarding the election, they will say: "Which campaign office would you like to direct that question to?" That is something that I have always done. I call that just common sense, and I think if all members did that, and that is what we hope all members would do, I think it would work well.

**Mr. Morin:** I think what Mr. Breaugh is saying is that there should be some form of training when a new member comes in to explain what the protocol is all about, to explain the etiquette of being a politician, and I agree with that 100 per cent. There is some form of it done within our own caucus.

I know that within the Liberal caucus, I had a sort of an initiation type of program, of course, but I think it should be done for all caucuses. Maybe for those issues it could be done for all the parties together.

I think it is a very good point. Where do you draw the line? It is a question of common sense. Some do have common sense, others do not; or they will go right to the limit and make a mistake.

I think it is good to be told exactly what should be done, and that is in the whole field: the question of expense accounts, the question of travelling; how do you go about that? I know it is done, but I think there should be more emphasis put on it. The question of protocol is extremely important.

Do you invite your opponent when you deliver a cheque or when the Premier comes in? I think it is a matter of common sense too, a question of being somewhat diplomatic, to invite your opponent, to bring him right on the stage and say, "Well, look, he is a member of this community," because once we are elected, our goal is to help our electors and constituents in the right way. We

should forget about politics. Would you not agree, Mr. Breaugh?

**The Vice-Chairman:** Some would have difficulty, I think, on some of those comments. Anyway, I think that the issue is dealing with—

**Mr. Breaugh:** Unless they are on the way to the Senate and know how to get there.

**The Vice-Chairman:** On the way to the Senate? I thought your party's view was not to have a Senate.

**Mr. Breaugh:** No, this is an entirely new Ontario senate. We have worked up a proposal to prepare for it.

**The Vice-Chairman:** I thought it was already the Workers' Compensation Board.

**Mr. Speaker:** If I could, I think Mr. Breaugh mentioned that these were brought up in the House. I could extend that. There were a number of these that came with requests of the public wanting a decision on whether it was a misuse of public funds or not. The general public is certainly looking at it closely too.

**The Vice-Chairman:** Just for the record, the member from Sudbury was very astute. Although three people from our persuasion were elected to city council, they were not in my householder, nor was the federal candidate.

**Mr. Breaugh:** It is widely known that you have no friends in Sudbury.

**The Vice-Chairman:** Well, it is widely known that a lot of them get elected to city council. In fact, the federal member, who is a very close friend, got elected as well. There are four without a householder.

Anyway, Mr. Matrundola, you had a question.

**Mr. Matrundola:** Yes. I know that a constituent may write to his federal member, or a federal member, and his postage is prepaid, free of postage. When they write to a provincial member, they have to pay for the postage. I believe this creates a little bit of a disadvantage, because although it is only 37 cents, when you take people on welfare or senior citizens, everybody counts. I was wondering what we could do to parallel to the federal counterpart and make it easier for the constituents to communicate with their provincial member postage-free?

**Mr. Speaker:** In response to that, naturally, the federal members receive that benefit because the post office is a federal institution.

I think the members have been fortunate, because they have been allowed in their householders to put in questionnaires and ask for the



views of their constituents and they are paid for. I do not know whether you would want all members just saying, "Please write me and we'll pay the postage," because do you not pay double the postage if they send it without a stamp? I think it is double.

We have no authority to say we will send it postage-free unless it has that special little mark on it.

**Mr. Matrundola:** I do understand, but I would like—

**Mr. Speaker:** What you are saying, though, is that we would have to send out envelopes with that special postage mark to all our constituents to write to us.

**Mr. Matrundola:** Right.

**Mr. Speaker:** It is a little complicated.

**Mr. Matrundola:** It is complicated and it is more costly if somebody has to pay for it, but you can write to your federal member postage-free. What I am trying to say is that we should explore the possibility of having the same privilege; of giving to our constituents the same privilege to write to their provincial member that they have when they write to their federal member. I am not asking for the privilege, I am trying to give the privilege to our constituents.

**The Vice-Chairman:** I think, though, that the issue was addressed here in this committee. As I understood it, there was some thought of the postal service looking at this mail problem and in fact having it delivered and absorbing the cost, but I think they were coming back with an answer to that, because it was raised, I believe by yourself and one other member of this committee. Perhaps what we could do is have the postal people come back when they are ready to deal with that answer to see if they can in fact accept the mail and worry about how we are going to do that. I know it is under active consideration by the postal people.

**Mr. Speaker:** I think this committee has written to the federal minister.

**The Vice-Chairman:** Yes. Thank you for reminding me about the federal minister.

**Mr. Daigeler:** Did I understand the Speaker to say that it is actually a privilege that the post office grants to the federal members? It is not paid for by the federal House, it is the post office that says, "You're a federal institution."

**Mr. Speaker:** To my knowledge, that is right, yes.

**Mr. Fleet:** In return, the federal government underwrites I do not know how many millions of dollars a year.

**The Vice-Chairman:** It may be one of those customs that, because of telephones and stuff, has outgrown its usefulness. It is useful to review some of these customs at some point and make decisions.

Are there further questions or comments of a general nature, if there is anything else we would like to cover?

**Mr. Speaker:** Unless there are any questions on Hansard or information services or broadcast—

**The Vice-Chairman:** We have the list.

**Mr. Speaker:** You have all the areas.

**The Vice-Chairman:** We have the areas to cover. Okay. Seeing none, I would like perhaps to explore the possibility of having a vote on 201, if we are ready to vote on that. I would be pleased to proceed with that, if you can give me the cheat sheet.

Vote 201 agreed to.

The estimates of the Office of the Assembly ordered reported.

**Mr. Speaker:** I would just like to remind the committee members, if I could—first of all, thanks for being so kind to the Speaker today.

**Mr. Fleet:** We hope you are going to reciprocate.

**The Vice-Chairman:** On some of the concerns.

**Mr. Speaker:** I would just like to stress that I think the board has been more aware of wanting to budget on an annual basis. In the past, quite often many things have come into the board through the year which have added a considerable amount of expense and created a lot of supplementary estimates. They are really looking more in favour, in other words, at longer-period planning rather than something at the last minute.

I say to this committee in particular, because it is so involved with the members and what is taking place around here, that I hope you will think in those terms, that when you have advice for the Speaker or for members of the board, you will not be too surprised if some of the things are not accepted until the next budget.

I maybe could also advise you that the board is now trying to meet the third Monday of any month and any suggestions or requests you have of the board, you can direct them either to me or to your caucus representative. Thank you very much.

**The Vice-Chairman:** Thank you all very much. This committee stands adjourned until next Wednesday at 3:30.

The committee adjourned at 5:23 p.m.

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## STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Chairman:** Epp, Herbert A. (Waterloo North L)**Vice-chairman:** Campbell, Sterling (Sudbury L)

Breagh, Michael J. (Oshawa NDP)

Hampton, Howard (Rainy River NDP)

Johnson, Jack (Wellington PC)

Matrundola, Gino (Willowdale L)

McClelland, Carman (Brampton North L)

Morin, Gilles E. (Carleton East L)

Sterling, Norman W. (Carleton PC)

Stoner, Norah (Durham West L)

Sullivan, Barbara (Halton Centre L)

**Substitutions:**

Daigeler, Hans (Nepean L) for Mr. Epp

Fleet, David (High Park-Swansea L) for Mr. McClelland

O'Neill, Yvonne (Ottawa-Rideau L) for Mrs. Sullivan

**Also taking part:** McCague, George R. (Simcoe West PC)**Clerk:** Forsyth, Smirle**Clerk pro tem:** Deller, Deborah**Staff:**

McLellan, Ray, Research Officer, Legislative Research Service

**Witnesses:****From the Office of the Assembly:**

Edighoffer, Hon. Hugh A., Speaker (Perth L)

Linden, Sidney B., Information and Privacy Commissioner/Ontario

Kushner, Gordon H., Executive Director, Commission on Election Finances

Ponick, William, Controller

Speakman, Barbara, Executive Director, Assembly Services

Schoenberger, Ellen, Director, Human Resources Branch

Land, R. Brian, Executive Director, Legislative Library











No. M-1

# Hansard

## Official Report of Debates

### Legislative Assembly of Ontario

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly  
Organization**



**Second Session, 34th Parliament**  
Wednesday 8 November 1989

Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer  
Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

## STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 8 November 1989

The committee met at 1530 in room 151.

### ORGANIZATION

**The Chair:** I am going to call the committee meeting to order. I want to welcome the former members back who were on the committee just a few short months ago before some changes, and I want to welcome the new committee members to the committee. We will deal with the first item with respect to a vice-chairman. I understand we are going to have a change there. I am going to call Mr Campbell to make the necessary motion.

**Mr Campbell:** Mr Chairman, I am resigning as vice-chair of the committee and in my place I would like to nominate the member for Scarborough-Ellesmere (Mr Faubert) as the new vice-chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr Campbell. There being no other nominations, all in favour? Carried. Thank you very much. Mr Faubert unfortunately cannot be here to make a long and very fine speech with regard to his acceptance of this important task, so I think we will bypass that today.

**Mr Ballinger:** Only in this absence.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr Ballinger. Once we deal with the agenda, there is another matter I wish to deal with in camera and we will do that at that time. We will deal with the other three matters first and then go in camera to deal with another matter.

### AUTOMATED BANKING MACHINE

**The Chair:** The first item has to do with automated banking machines. Members will recall we discussed the possibility of having an automated banking machine in the building here. There have been a number of requests by members that we have such a machine in the building for the convenience of getting money and so forth. I am going to ask the clerk to update us on the discussions we have had to date.

**Clerk of the Committee:** I sent out two letters, one to the Canadian Bankers' Association and one to the Toronto Transit Commission. The letter to the Canadian Bankers' Association asked it to provide us with criteria on costs involved in having a banking machine installed. The one to the TTC asked what process it went

through to get banking machines installed in subway stations and whether we could find out from it what arrangements it has with the bank in terms of payment for servicing costs and so on.

The Canadian Bankers' Association wrote back and first of all said it would not recommend the services of any one particular bank, but it also recommended that whatever banking machine service you decide upon should be part of the Interac system, since it is a widely used system and most banks are part of that system.

**Mr Kerrio:** This must have been discussed before this meeting. What I wonder about is what kind of demand or what kind of assessment of the whole situation was made to see how many members would avail themselves of the service. Was there any kind of question?

**Mr Breaugh:** Maybe I can give you a little bit of background. A number of members and staff have indicated the obvious, that there is no banking opportunity in the building. It is sometimes a little difficult to get banking services, as you may have to go as far away as Yonge Street, which is not a big deal on a nice summer day but is kind of difficult on other days. I know there was a request put in from our staff to see if that were possible. So far we have simply canvassed to see what proposals could be entertained. What you have in front of you now is the result of that, the type of equipment that is available and how people could use it.

From my reading of the people who talked to me or wrote to me about it, they are probably more interested in some ability to get a cash withdrawal service than anything else, which you could do either way. I guess it would simply depend on whether a full service machine would require any form of cost. I do not see an answer to that question.

**Mr Kerrio:** The only reason I raised the question was that I had not been circulated and I did not know to what degree you had circulated the members

**The Chair:** There has not been a specific poll or circulation of a questionnaire regarding this, Mr Kerrio, but there have been a number of requests. It has been a kind of unscientific approach, but nevertheless it has been one by which we are trying to meet the needs of the

members and the other staff members around here.

**Mr Campbell:** I cannot remember when it was discussed, but some members may recall that, I think in the early spring or late spring, it was raised in caucus at one point. You may not have been there. There seemed to be an indication of support for the service. Given our two options, perhaps option (b) looks reasonable, given the situation. I think there was interest expressed at the time. A number of people spoke on behalf of various caucuses and staff and staff of the Legislature, who also were in support of such a move. I think it has been fairly widely discussed in the committee.

**Mr Ballinger:** I am pleased to be sitting in for Mr Faubert, who unfortunately is sick this afternoon. I just want to say on behalf of the committee that I want to thank everyone for supporting Frank for the position of vice-chair. I know he would want me to convey that thanks to everyone.

I want to follow through with what Mr Breaugh said. I think this is a really important issue on behalf of this committee. I know that a banking machine within Queen's Park would be welcomed by almost everyone. Mr Breaugh asked a question related to the cost. In section (a) of the report it says that banks may not be willing. Have we followed up any further with that to find out whether, if we went to a full banking machine, there would be costs attributed to the Legislative Assembly.

**Clerk of the Committee:** Once we got the letter from the Canadian Bankers' Association, the Royal Bank was contacted. They would attach costs to the installation of a full service banking machine because their staff would have to come in on a daily basis and service that machine. A cash withdrawal machine, one that only allows withdrawals and does not allow deposits and payment of bills is serviced by an armoured car company. With the Royal Bank anyway, there are no costs attached to that.

The other thing the committee should keep in mind when it is talking about it, when it is considering a full service banking machine, is that it is only full service for those people who have an account with that particular bank. In other words, if it is a Royal Bank machine, it is only full service to Royal Bank customers; if it is a Bank of Montreal machine, it is only full service to Bank of Montreal customers. Everyone on the Interac system may withdraw from that machine, but only customers of that bank may deposit and pay bills.

**Mr Ballinger:** Just by way of supplementary, I want to follow up so that I at least get my position on the record. I have no difficulty supporting recommendation (b), which would be a withdrawal machine only.

1540

**Mr Tatham:** If we support (b) and it works out and people want more, is there any cost to going from (b) to (a)? Could this be done?

**The Chair:** I think there would be a cost because that is a full banking system. The clerk has just indicated that if you have a full banking system, then there are going to be some costs involved in that.

**Mr Tatham:** I would think it would be smart, just as Mr Ballinger said, to go with (b) and then if we find it works—

**Mr J. M. Johnson:** I am not in support of the assembly subsidizing all or part of the servicing costs of (a) and I would like to know what costs would be involved in (b). I was at the bank a short while ago. It is one short block across Bay Street to the Province of Ontario Savings Office. I opened an account there 14 years ago and it has served me well since. I really find it difficult to believe that we would be spending any extra money to subsidize the convenience of someone being able to cash a cheque downstairs. If we cannot walk a block, then we have a problem, but if they will provide the service without cost, I have no problem with it.

**The Chair:** I think that is the general tenor of the discussion here, that members do not want to pay extra money in order to get this service.

**Mrs Sullivan:** As you know, because of conflicts with another committee I was involved on, I have not been able to participate in this committee for some time. However, at the last meeting I did participate in, which about eight months ago, I recall that our decision at that meeting was that we were going to be asking for proposals from banks. This is not a proposal. This is some work that has been done by the clerk of the committee in terms of gathering information that we could use to make a recommendation.

In my view, what we should be doing now is making a recommendation from this committee to the Board of Internal Economy, which has to make the decision in the end, that we would like to see action taken as quickly as possible, that it is a legitimate member's service and that we would like it to proceed as quickly as possible on requests for proposals from the banks. I feel that is all this committee can do in this case.



**The Chair:** I wonder whether the clerk would bring us up to date with regard to the credit union service.

**Clerk of the Committee:** Currently, the Province of Ontario Savings Office is not a member of Interac and you cannot access that facility through an automated banking machine. The Ontario Civil Service Credit Union Ltd., however, is part of Interac and it does have a banking machine. The committee may want to consider whether it wants to recommend as well that the credit union be considered as one of the facilities that is contacted to provide a machine.

**The Chair:** It might be the least complicated of the choices we have. We could avoid making a choice whether we want the Royal Bank, the Toronto-Dominion Bank, the Bank of Montreal or whatever.

**Mr Breaugh:** I would like to move then that—

**The Chair:** Before you make a motion, Mr Campbell, you had a question?

**Mr Campbell:** It was along the same lines of who participates in Interac and who does not. I am glad that was clarified because with all due respect to walking a block, a number of us do not have branches of the Province of Ontario Savings Office in our home ridings and if it is not a member of Interac, it really does not help us very much to deal with the issue. I just wanted to clarify that.

**The Chair:** Mr Breaugh moves that the (b) option be pursued in this way, that the committee recommend that a cash withdrawal service only on the Interac system be provided to members and that we forward this recommendation to the Board of Internal Economy.

**Mr Breaugh:** I would assume they would then proceed under those two loose guidelines to canvas who would like to put one in.

**The Chair:** Any recommendation about the credit union or anything of that nature?

**Mr Breaugh:** As far as I am concerned, as long as it is on the Interac system, that is about as good as we are going to get. The credit union I belong to, for example, is on the Interac system so it would be useful to me. There is no sense in putting a cash withdrawal machine down here that very few members or staff could use. The only advantage I see in the Interac system is that most of the major banks and most of the major credit unions are part of that system and that would be useful to a lot of people.

**Mr Kerrio:** I appreciate and agree with Mr Breaugh's submission. If in fact you are going to

make a decision on a bank and there is no charge from any bank, you just decide on any number that qualifies and draw it from a hat. I do not know how you could choose one.

**Mr Ballinger:** Well, if they choose the Royal Bank I will have to declare a conflict because I owe them money.

**The Chair:** Okay, we have a motion on the floor.

Motion agreed to.

**The Chair:** I was remiss earlier in thanking Mr Campbell for the work he did as vice-chairman of this committee during the last year. He worked very hard on a number of items including the security matter. I want to thank him on behalf of all us for the work he did.

#### DISPLAYS IN THE LEGISLATURE

**The Chair:** Members will recall that during the period they have spent here, and all parties have been guilty of this, sometimes there have been displays in the Legislatures. People have held up phone numbers. People have held up different signs. People have come in with T-shirts sponsoring some particular item or some victory of a hockey team or whatever. All these to some extent have been displays and the Speaker referred this matter to this committee.

We have taken a look at it. As a result of discussing it and taking a look at it, I am putting some options before the committee. They may want to look at those options and they may want to look at some other options. Are there any members who have any comments? You have the report in front of you. I do not know whether the clerk has any comment with regard to it, but it is a matter that was referred to us by the Speaker back on 21 June.

**Mr Breaugh:** There is a difference. We have a new set of standing orders and it has removed the appeal process to a ruling of the Speaker. I would be a little cautious about this. We do not have a lot of what might be called demonstrations of any sort on the floor of the chamber. Occasionally, somebody will do something that might be seen by some to be a demonstration, but I think you could get carried away with this in a hurry.

For example, last week a number of members appeared in the chamber with a little button about wife assault being a crime. I think that is what it read. I did not think that caused any problems for anybody. I do not believe that upset the decorum of the House a great deal. Members are wearing poppies at this time of year and I think that is appropriate. Some would take that as a demon-

stration. I think what we mean, or what the Speaker was referring to here, is that on occasion there have been people who have brought in large signs or something else.

I think this is probably best left in the hands of the Speaker. I do not know how you would draw guidelines. For example, is it totally inappropriate for a minister to display a map and try to show how something is being done in a given place? I do not think so. I do not think I want a rule that prevents that. I want the Speaker to maintain decorum in the chamber. It seems to me that by giving him the absolute power to rule someone out of order, he has that.

Previously, when one could appeal the Speaker's ruling on the matter, I suppose the Speaker would have been in a rather difficult position. I tend to think we have done about as much as we can do by doing what I think is the right thing, and that is giving the Speaker the authority to rule in the chamber without any challenge from anybody else present.

My preference would be to leave it as is. I may regret that some day somebody came in and behaved in a totally inappropriate manner, but that is a pretty hard thing to stop. I do not know how you would write rules to stop that. For example, if you decided to say something in the standing orders that no one could ever wear—

**Mr J. M. Johnson:** Red ties.

**Mr Breaugh:** —a red tie in the chamber, is that what we are here for? Does it really kill the world if someone actually wears a T-shirt in there that says something on it. I do not think so. I do not know how you would write that kind of rule. I guess I am not really pleased when people come in with props for the day, but it seems to me that the Speaker simply has to say: "That's not appropriate. If you want to play with telephone numbers, fine, you can do that somewhere else, but you cannot do it in here." We have got it to the point where the member cannot appeal the Speaker's ruling on the matter, and the Speaker can simply go to the next member who may have something to say.

So my preference would be, having changed the standing orders to give the Speaker additional powers, to leave it as is.

**1550**

**Mrs Sullivan:** I think that for those of us who are relatively new to the House, it is interesting indeed to see the kinds of displays that are used. For the most part, I think, in the past couple of years, where they have been used they have been quite responsible. There has not been a horrendous form of disruption in the House from the

materials that are being used, whether it is a decoration of commemoration or whether it is indeed something that is used in the form of presenting a petition or even a question. One of the things that I found interesting is that where there have been props used, they have been used by members on all sides of the House. They are not limited to the opposition party. Indeed, our members, in asking questions, have also used the props.

I concur with Mr Breaugh that this is really a matter of precedent and of the Speaker's obligation to maintain order in the House, and I know that he has asked us for comments on the kinds of standards of decorum that we wish to make recommendations about, but frankly I think it is best left, again, with the Speaker. Under the standing orders and under precedent he has very clear authority and responsibility for maintaining order.

**Mr J. M. Johnson:** Quite simply I agree with the two former speakers, and unless there is something that develops in the future, we can address it again. Sometimes there is overkill and I think we can live with it.

**The Chair:** I think it is quite obvious we cannot have a rule for every little item that comes up.

**Mr Tatham:** I am as guilty, I suppose, as anybody. I have used props on a few occasions although I try to use it to demonstrate a point, illustrate a point, and not in a frivolous manner, although some of you think otherwise. I think that it is something that usually you can perhaps use to help people understand what really happens—those people who do not understand—particularly to try to help urban people understand rural situations.

**Mr J. M. Johnson:** We should have brought those 12 rats in that day.

**The Chair:** Does anyone want to make a motion with respect to the recommendations or the options that we have?

**Mr Breaugh:** I would suggest that the appropriate response is to have the chair simply write to the Speaker and indicate that there have been changes in the standing orders since this letter was written and the committee is of the opinion that no further changes are necessary.

**Mrs Sullivan:** No, there are no guidelines.

**Mr Breaugh:** Although I am not the one who sits in the chair on occasion, it is sorely tempting to say something to members who are sitting there chomping on peanuts, which I find disgusting to watch.



**Mr Ballinger:** But not to participate.

**The Chair:** The chair will follow up on that and respond to the Speaker's earlier communication to us. Item 3: we are dealing now with a matter that the member for Kitchener (Mr D. R. Cooke) raised. All of you have communication in front of you; his letter to the Speaker and the Speaker's letter to me, drawing it to the attention of this committee. You will also see on the last page there are some options that we might follow; the second last and last page. So if you have comments with regard to this, we can deal with them at this point.

**Mr Breugh:** I read Mr Cooke's letter and I believe he has some validity in what he says here, but I fail to see that a major problem has arisen here. Traditionally, members do not write dissenting opinions. They do not write an additional naysaying to the committee's report. On occasion, someone feels strongly about a particular matter, and the committees that I have worked with, the committees have usually been pretty reasonable about saying: "Well, the committee report will be finalized on Friday. If you have a differing opinion and you want it added to the committee report, you have until Friday to get it ready" so that no member can hold up the tabling of a committee report or the completion of the report.

But aside from that, I think it is a reasonably valid thing to provide an opportunity on occasions when people feel strongly about matters, that they can write a dissenting opinion and have that included as part of the report. Now, from a practical point of view, how many people actually read the report is a moot question; how many read it right to the bitter end where they might actually find the dissenting opinion printed, I think very few people do that. So I am not sure that it is a particularly effective tool, but I do not have any problem with the suggestion that Mr Cooke had of including it as an appendix.

But I am not quite sure why we would bother, frankly. I have not seen a whole lot of this happen in the time that I have been here. It happens on occasion when someone really feels that at the end of the give and take in a committee process, you have not gotten your point across and you feel the need to go away and write some other opinion and attach that to the report; but I do not believe that is a big deal. I would disagree somewhat that it puts the rest of the committee at a disadvantage.

As I read the newspapers around here, I have never seen anybody give much print space to a dissenting opinion from anybody. I have never

seen the electronic media even note that a dissenting opinion went in. It is one of those cute little things that we tell ourselves: "We really said what we had to say, and look at page 39 in the committee's report, you will see our opinion listed there." If it makes the members of the committee feel better to do such a thing, we ought to encourage that. I do not see that there is any disadvantage to the rest of the committee.

Again, I would have a tendency to simply leave the process as it is. The only concerns that I have ever had with that is that I do not believe that a minority of members on a committee have a right to hold up the committee's work, but on each occasion when I have seen this used, the chairman of the committee always says: "We intend to have our report finalized by the end of this week. If you have a dissent and you want it included, you have it in the clerk's hands by Friday of this week and we will print it for you; and if you cannot get your act together by Friday, too bad." It seems to me that is fair.

**Mr Kerrio:** I have a question and it might be worth putting on the table for a little discussion, that is, when we read the letter and it is particularly directed towards the recent standing committee on finance and economic affairs preparing its report on prebudget consultations, I wonder in our parliamentary procedure when you are talking about money issues, as is the prebudget report, if that one single area takes on just a little different role than the norm in committee report.

Do you know where I am coming from on that one?

**Mr Breugh:** I don't think so.

**Mr Kerrio:** Maybe not, but it was just a question that I thought I would put before the committee as to whether that has a different implication from other reports that might show a dissenting view of some members. But when it comes to a money bill, it is where the government is totally responsible for budgeting and money cannot be brought into questions in the forms of bills or anything else, and I did not know whether that may be considered as a one exception or it should even be considered. I do not feel strongly about it. I just thought that is one area where I wondered about the government's position.

**Mr Breugh:** To show you what a dynamite piece this is, the letter comes from the chairman of the committee on finance and economic affairs. Can anyone in this room tell us what the dissenting opinion was about? I cannot.

**Mr Kerrio:** I appreciate what you are saying. No, I cannot either.

**Mr Ballinger:** He is no longer the chairman of that committee.

**The Chair:** Yes. That is one way of resolving a problem; get a different chairman. Mrs Sullivan and then Mr Tatham.

**Mrs Sullivan:** I have written a dissenting report not relating to a standing committee, but when I was a member of the Commission on Election Finances; and some of you who are old and grey will remember that—

**The Chair:** I notice you looked at me.

**Mr Ballinger:** There is nobody here that old.  
1600

**Mrs Sullivan:** That is right. Well, that was before, I must say, I was elected and that was when I recommended that the commission's recommendation relating to members' salaries was not facing the real world life of members. Indeed, that dissent did receive some attention, particularly from members of the House, and it ultimately made no difference in the final decision.

I think that one of the things I found interesting about this letter was Mr Cooke's suggestion that there ought to be a role for parties to express an opinion. I think that under parliamentary tradition, there really is not a role for parties although our practice is different from that; and, frankly, if I wanted to see the committees improve in any way at all, it would less of an emphasis on party activity and more of an emphasis on the work of individual members reaching a consensus or dissenting from an opinion based on the study that they have done.

In fact, I think that indeed with the federal finance committee, one of the reasons why that has become such a strong committee and, I believe, a strong committee in a true parliamentary tradition is that there has been room for out-of-party discussion debate. I really dislike the suggestion that there ought to be any move to the increased role of the partisan in committee discussion.

I wanted to put that on the table. Indeed, I think that there is plenty of room now for a dissenting voice and that the weight of a majority opinion indeed outweighs the weight of a dissenting opinion, in any case.

**Mr Kerrio:** How do you check with other jurisdictions on how they handle these things, Mr Chairman? Mr Breaugh should know about that. You make a list of what we have to settle with other input.

**Mr J. M. Johnson:** That is—

**Mr Tatham:** Clarification, Mr Chairman: I just wondered if you want to put in a dissenting report, is there no problem in any committee?

**Mr Breaugh:** That is right.

**Mr Tatham:** This has been history here.

**Mr Breaugh:** Well, the practice is that as long as you do not interfere with the committee's work of writing a report, it is generally happy to have you put whatever you want.

**The Chair:** You just cannot use the same resources in order to draft that report.

**Mr Tatham:** You have to do it on your own.

**The Chair:** Yes. You have to do it yourself or the caucus.

**Mr Tatham:** One or two dissenting people dissent on two different items on a—

**The Chair:** Usually when that occurs, they do it on behalf of the caucus. It is more likely to be a caucus do it or committee members of one particular party than an individual, although it does not preclude the individual from doing it. In that case, they would have the resources of the caucus available to the drafter.

**Mr Tatham:** You could end up then with a majority report. Say, for the sake of argument here, the Liberal caucus with a majority could say, "We want this done," and you could have a dissenting report from the Conservative caucus and from the NDP caucus.

**The Chair:** You could.

**Mrs Sullivan:** But they would appear as individual members rather than as a caucus.

**Mr Tatham:** But it would have to be done with the idea that, okay, we say that it will be done by this time. They would have to then concur and be in on time.

**The Chair:** Correct.

**Mr J. M. Johnson:** I would support the feeling of most of the members that we should leave it as it is with the exception possibly of taking up on Mr Breaugh's idea that they be advised that there be no delay mechanism in place, that the chairman has a right to not hold the report up for some dissenting opinion. Other than that, there is no problem.

**The Chair:** Okay. We will go with item 1 and also communicate your wishes to the Speaker.

**Mr Ballinger:** Do you need a motion?

**The Chair:** I think we should have the motion.

Mr Ballinger moves recommendation 1, that no change is necessary to the standing orders to reflect the discussion we have just had.

Motion agreed to.

The committee continued in camera at 1605.



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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY****Chair:** Epp, Herbert A. (Waterloo North L)**Vice-Chair:** Faubert, Frank (Scarborough-Ellesmere L)

Breagh, Michael J. (Oshawa NDP)

Brown, Michael A. (Algoma-Manitoulin L)

Campbell, Sterling (Sudbury L)

Eakins, John F. (Victoria-Haliburton L)

Farnan, Michael (Cambridge NDP)

Johnson, Jack (Wellington PC)

Kerrio, Vincent G. (Niagara Falls L)

Sterling, Norman W. (Carleton PC)

Sullivan, Barbara (Halton Centre L)

**Substitutions:**

Ballinger, William G. (Durham-York L) for Mr Faubert

Tatham, Charlie (Oxford L) for Mr Eakins

**Clerk:** Deller, Deborah





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# Hansard

## Official Report of Debates

### Legislative Assembly of Ontario

#### **Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly**

Organization

Réseau Ont. Parl. Network

**Second Session, 34th Parliament**

Wednesday 6 December 1989



Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer

Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

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Contents of the proceedings reported in this issue of Hansard appears at the back, together with a list of the members of the committee and other members and witnesses taking part.

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

## STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Wednesday 6 December 1989**

The committee met at 1539 in room 151.

### ORGANIZATION

**The Chair:** I call this meeting of the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly to order. We have a few items we want to deal with.

One is somewhat of a formality. Last time, when we made the motion to appoint Frank Faubert as vice-chair of the committee, what we did not do was have him appointed also as the Liberal Party representative to the subcommittee, as Mr Breaugh and Mr Sterling are members of that subcommittee. So I will entertain a motion at this time to appoint him and to replace Mr Campbell who has been sitting on the subcommittee until this point.

**Mr J. M. Johnson:** I will make that motion. Motion agreed to.

**The Chair:** The next item on the agenda is to conduct an annual review of the broadcast system. We have Bill Somerville, who is the director responsible for those responsibilities, here today. Please take a seat at the table. I want to remind members this is something that we do every year. Often we have done it in January-February when we have a couple of weeks to do it and when we have had a fairly heavy workload in December. This year we are able to work it in at this point, so that is why we have Mr Somerville here, because we may have a number of other things we have to do in January and February.

Welcome, Mr Somerville. Maybe you want to lead off with a statement. I know you have brought your monitor with you in your back pocket. You have a video for us, I understand, and some other things. There are also some pages, which may have been distributed to the committee members by the clerk, three extra pages which you did not have in your original handout. Members may want to take note of those.

### RESEAU ONT. PARL. NETWORK

**Mr Somerville:** It is a pleasure to be here. As the chair said, I normally report to the committee in February, so when he asked me to come before you this month I was a bit surprised. I hope I have given you enough information on the broadcast and recording service, but if you feel that

something is omitted, maybe you could ask the questions today.

**The Chair:** I figured you had so much good news for us that we wanted to have it before the holiday season rather than have it afterwards.

**Mr Somerville:** Great. I hope that is the case. The chairman said I brought a videotape. I hope all of you have seen the videotape, but I brought it in case you have not. It is a seven-minute tape that I show to visitors to the assembly to explain broadcast and recording and the facilities that we run. With your indulgence, I think I can clear the seven minutes. If a picture is worth 1,000 words, this is the book on broadcast and recording services. I will play that first and then we could have questions.

[Video presentation]

**1549**

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. That was very informative.

**Mr Somerville:** I pointed my finger when the Minister of Health (Mrs Caplan) was on and you saw subtitles going through the bottom. That is what we call closed-captioning for the hearing impaired. We now broadcast eight hours of that per week live, and a total of 15 hours when you include repeat broadcasts. Someone with a receiver at home will see the text coming up like that.

**The Chair:** It is only those people who have those receivers.

**Mr Somerville:** Yes.

**Mr Kerrio:** Very briefly, that is an excellent way to start. I am quite new on the committee and maybe some of the others do not mind going back over it and having a little bit of a refresher.

The one little thing I would like to sort of have described for me would be the transponder, the function, and in what ways we would be sharing that; on what basis we would be sharing that with some of the people who have been given permission to use it, unless you want to give your presentation.

**The Chair:** Did you have some other part of your presentation?

**Mr Somerville:** I have an introduction to the first page on that material I passed to you. I



would prefer questions from the members rather than reading a monologue.

The transponder is like a transmitter that is based on a satellite and we beam the pictures from earth on to this transponder. On the satellite we use there are 28 transponders, each one dedicated to a different channel, like CBC or TVO or la chaîne française. They have their own channel and we have a dedicated transponder which we have and occupy 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

In the past we have had applications to this committee by interested groups to use that transponder time that we do not broadcast on. On page 1 here, I have detailed what happened last year with the transponder.

The committee met in January and changed the guidelines to make them a bit more specific than they were in the past. There is a copy of the guidelines—I think you probably have them—and three applications met these guidelines last year. One was the Wawatay native community, which we had an agreement with over the last two years and we extended that agreement for an additional half hour this year. So Wawatay now broadcast on our transponder, on the ONT. PARL transponder, for one hour on Saturday between 1 pm and 2 pm and one hour on Sunday between 6 pm and 7 pm. These programs are done in native languages, mainly Cree and a few other languages.

**Mr Kerrio:** Are all the things that are done on that basis sort of community oriented and/or is there a monetary involvement as well by some users of our transponder?

**Mr Somerville:** No. There has been no monetary exchange. It has always been given free when the company or the association comes to this committee and makes a request for transponder time. Another one who did apply this year was the Easter Seal Society but it withdrew its application before meeting the committee. It could not get other arrangements. It is a fairly specific arrangement we have. A company, to use the transponder, has to get \$5 million worth of insurance, has to get a permit from the CRTC, has to get permission from the assembly and has to get permission from TVO. It is not a lengthy process but it is a fairly regulated process. It is not easy to get through.

**Mr Kerrio:** I appreciate that.

**Mr Somerville:** The Rotel one—I do not know if you want me to speak to both—that was one application that did not quite fit the new guidelines. They managed up to the past guidelines so the committee made an exception for them and gave permission for this telethon to

go on which raised funds. We have a nice appreciative letter back from the Rotel association. The only application we have on the books at the moment is one from the Ontario Cable Telecommunications Association who would like to use it in June next year. That is up to date on the transponder.

It is a very good facility. At one time a member asked why we have the transponder for 24 hours a day, 12 months a year. The finances of it—it is cheaper to do it that way than to book on an occasional basis like we did the first year. The first year, by booking the transponder on an occasional basis, cost us more than an annual lease does so this is the best financial arrangement to occupy a transponder.

**Mrs Sullivan:** I have three questions, two of them are fairly short but the third one I expect will be longer.

The first one is, when is the news digest broadcast? I did not know about that. I do not know why I missed it but I did not know it was on.

**Mr Somerville:** Eight in the morning and 9:30 in the morning. When it comes to the quieter period when the House is not sitting, we usually run it at 11 o'clock as well. So eight o'clock, 9:30 and 11 o'clock. At the moment the 11 o'clock one has been dropped and we run Focus Ontario.

**Mrs Sullivan:** At those times, in the eight o'clock and 9:30 slots, does it go simply into the House or through all of the cable networks?

**Mr Somerville:** No, only through the House and government buildings within the Queen's Park complex.

**Mrs Sullivan:** I see; okay. So I could not get it on channel 32, which is the channel that we see in my riding?

**Mr Somerville:** No.

**Mrs Sullivan:** I have a second question related to the placement of televisions. I notice in your broadcast you indicated that you have a television in every member's office. There are many members who have offices outside of the Queen's Park complex. How do you deal with that situation?

**Mr Somerville:** I could be corrected later, but it was agreed initially that the members based in the House and in the legislative precinct had television access. When a member gets transferred to a ministry, then it becomes the ministry's responsibility to supply a television set to the minister and the minister's parliamentary assistant.

**Mrs Sullivan:** Have you reviewed, in fact, the availability of television service in those cases?

**Mr Somerville:** Yes. The count I have is that there are 504 subscribers on the Rogers system within the Queen's Park complex, but I do not know where all these television sets are. When it comes to a ministry, it makes the decision whether to have cable in a member's office, a minister's office or a boardroom. That is a ministry decision.

**Mrs Sullivan:** Using myself as an example, I was in an office which did not have cable and, frankly, I found that for the period of time that that was my situation, which was about a year, it really was very difficult to keep in touch with the legislative matters of the House. I relied on the television when it was available to me, whether for votes or other matters, because we certainly were not even on the sound bell at the office I was at. I wondered if that was something that the broadcasting service could pursue to ensure that all members, no matter where their locations, are indeed serviced by the service.

**Mr Somerville:** That is one of my pet projects. I continually push for more television sets in areas and especially to all the members. In fact, you probably would remember that I have an application to put television sets in each committee room so that you could be watching the House while you are attending a meeting here. The funds were refused last year by the Board of Internal Economy for this. I will apply again this year for the funds to put television sets in committee rooms.

I encourage the ministers and give them the routes and the telephone number to contact at Rogers Cable. It is a very modest cost to have cable installed in a government office because all the offices are wired to the floor, so it is not a major expense.

**Mr Kerrio:** On that point, if I may, would it not be more the responsibility of this committee to deal with that kind of issue?

**The Chair:** I was just speaking to the clerk about that and I think what we very well could do at the conclusion of Mr Somerville's presentation is to make some recommendations to the Board of Internal Economy with regard to exactly the kind of problem Mrs Sullivan has drawn to our attention.

**Mrs Sullivan:** My third question relates to the point in the bottom paragraph on page 2 of your brief, relating to channel availability. Could you expand on that and talk to us a bit more about when you see the conflict arising with the

availability of channels, what likelihood there would be of Rogers not continuing to make those channels available and then, in case Rogers were not available, where the outlet would be? Have you made contingency plans for those circumstances?

**Mr Somerville:** When I say Rogers in that paragraph on page 2, I mean we piggyback on the back of Rogers. Rogers has what is called a subhead over in the Macdonald Block, where it feeds all the signals from Rogers Cable into that room in the basement and the signals are distributed from there. The agreement we have with Rogers is that we feed the nine channels from this building into that head end and then distribute on its system. The cables belong to the building and the system and signals are rented from Rogers.

We had a minor conflict when Rogers increased the channel capacity in September. They managed to waive the channels and move into the 60s band, with 53 to 61 remaining with the assembly. If you remember, in the past we had much better signals and there was less interference. Now we have a problem with interference. The band is getting congested.

If we do not come to an agreement with Rogers, an easy solution in my opinion is to have only the Legislative Assembly service on the cable system. But then members and everyone else on the system would lose all the other channels that are supplied by Rogers. You would have only the nine channels produced by broadcast and recording service. It would be a great loss, but that is a solution.

1600

**Mrs Sullivan:** If that were a solution, what would that mean in terms of reaching the cable networks outside of Rogers, other than Rogers?

**Mr Somerville:** It would not affect that. We distribute only one signal from the House here. All the other eight channels are for internal use by the assembly, so we distribute only one channel widely.

**Mrs Sullivan:** In the case where we use our own facilities to broadcast within the precinct, could we reach legislators who are not located within the precinct, and second, would there be any additional equipment and costs associated with that?

**Mr Somerville:** I think there would be a minor addition of equipment, probably between \$5,000 and \$10,000. We definitely would not get to ministries off the complex. We have a problem at the moment getting to ministries up on Bloor



Street, for example, and south of College Street. I am currently negotiating with Rogers and have been for a year to try to get these ministries put on the system, but that means running a new cable from the Macdonald Block over to the Ministry of Culture and Communications or up to the freedom of information office. That has been ongoing for a year now. It is just overcapacity and not enough cables.

Two cables already have been run within this building and the Whitney Block just to get ready for this problem. At the moment, you can receive Rogers and the in-house system in these two buildings, but not beyond that.

**The Chair:** When you were speaking about informing the members of all the services you have available, I was wondering whether a couple of times a year you could send out that sheet you have.

**Mr Somerville:** Sure.

**The Chair:** Maybe you could do that in the very near future. I know what happens: they file it away, forget to look at it and forget that all these services are available. They are excellent services.

**Mr Somerville:** Yes, I plan to put out more of the four-page Preview I published, but I recommend the members watch television channels 4 and 12 where we list all the programming that we produce. That is on channels 4 and 12, the information channels.

We briefly dealt with page 2. I wonder if there are any other questions that come up from that.

**The Chair:** I know Mr Campbell has some questions. Do you have some about page 2? If not, we can go on to the others.

**Mr Campbell:** Mine was general, so whenever you feel is appropriate, I will leave it to you.

**The Chair:** Go ahead.

**Mr Campbell:** Moving to page 3, you are dealing with the audio system here, with the television set system in the committee rooms so that members can follow. I note that you have gone to the Board of Internal Economy and asked for their concurrence to your request. That brings back the question that this committee has been dealing with for quite some time, the role of committee chairmen in representing our members' interests in the board's deliberations.

Could you answer any of the questions that were raised earlier, in September I believe, on this issue of more direct representation to our committee's deliberations before the board? As you recall, the deliberations centred on the fact that we were making a number of recommenda-

tions that we felt would enhance the members' ability to do their job. We felt part of that role was that the committee Chair be more directly involved with the decision-making process.

Then I have a question for Mr Somerville that might follow that, if you have any comments. If you do not, I do not want to put you on the spot, Mr Chairman, but I just wondered if you had considered a strategy on that.

**The Chair:** I do not mind being put on the spot. All I can tell you at this time is that we really have not considered that further. The board, I think, from time to time considers how it is dealing with the members' concerns, and at that time one of the things we had before us was a report to the director of finance with regard to a number of things that relate to members. The board, I think, will be dealing with that in the near future.

I am informed by the clerk that I have been asked to appear before the board this coming week with regard to our budget and so forth, and maybe that will be a good time to raise this if I get a chance. I know that the board is very busy and has a lot of things that it is dealing with and I am not sure I will be able to address it at that time but I will try.

**Mr Campbell:** I appreciate that. I was just asking for an update more than anything else.

Turning to Mr Somerville again, it probably would be a lot easier if we could do the audio and the video lines at the same time. It might be a little cheaper, and maybe that point could be made, that if the decision was made at least for this room, to deal with the set availability in this room, you could start people sort of thinking about other areas. The irony is, of course, that we have got very good service in most of the offices. Some of the ministries do not have, and you have explained that, but where sometimes members are waiting to speak and trying to time things they are constantly in and out and it is difficult for a lot of committees to deal with committee business when this kind of busy time is happening in the House.

I am wondering if that point could be made, along with your audio installation, that you could say at the same time that it would be cheaper to run the cable and all of that—at least do that much—and then deal with the sets.

**Mr Somerville:** On that point, we are planning to run the video cable, so when the new audio system is installed, hopefully by the end of January, the cables for video will be installed at the same time in this room.



If I could mention the addition, if I do not get permission or the funds to buy the television set, you will be able to listen to the House on the infrared hearing system we will be providing. This is a new addition that will also come in in January. I know it is not as nice as just watching the picture of who is on, but you will be able to at least listen to the House proceedings when you are attending this committee room.

**The Chair:** So the audio will be available?

**Mr Somerville:** The audio will be available by picking up one of the infrared receivers, and you can just privately listen into the House as you see fit.

**Mrs Sullivan:** I am confused about the question of monitors. You indicated earlier that there were about 540 monitors around. There are 130 members, there are clerks, and I assume the library requires monitors. Where are the rest of them?

**Mr Somerville:** I have one in my office, we have two in the broadcast and recording service as such, and in all ministries and boardrooms and things. There are 500 systems on Rogers's books from the Queen's Park complex.

**Mrs Sullivan:** Including monitors in ministers' offices?

**Mr Somerville:** Yes, ministers, deputies, boardrooms, communications directors' offices. Moving on to—

**The Chair:** Before you go any further, when you are dealing with a new audio system for this room, for simultaneous translation, will the plug-in be in the panel in front of us so that we will be able to plug it in like we can in the House or will we have to have the remote thing?

**Mr Somerville:** You will have to have the remote.

**The Chair:** You had not contemplated the plug-ins, which would be probably more convenient.

**Mr Somerville:** No. It would involve building another system to give you that distribution like we have in the House.

**The Chair:** Yes, it would probably be premature to build it at this time.

1610

**Mr Somerville:** Yes. I hope the television sets will arrive so you can keep an eye on the proceedings, instead of trying to listen to one conversation and to a second one in your ear. This is an interim move.

**The Chair:** The simultaneous translation will be for this room and there will also be something

to hear what is going on in the House. Will that be on the same unit?

**Mr Somerville:** The same receiver, yes.

**The Chair:** It is just a matter of putting it to a different channel.

**Mr Somerville:** Which channel you tune in or select on the receiver.

**The Chair:** So there will actually be four channels on it.

**Mr Somerville:** Yes.

Could I mention the computer control graphic display? This committee has raised it before and I did it in the past, when we were staffed, to intimate committee meetings, hearings and asking for presentations. We are very close now to having a computer control system that will run 24 hours a day. I will probably come to the committee to ask what we should be putting on it. I have had private conversations with some members to ask what they think we should put on the system 24 hours a day.

I have a sample here of what we can produce. I do not know if you would like to see it.

**The Chair:** As long as it does not take 24 hours.

**Mr Somerville:** No, one minute. I did not pick the sample. It happened to be in the newspapers and was delivered as a press release to my office.

This would be broadcast off the satellite with background music. It would run when the House is not sitting or we are not replaying any proceedings. There would be just background music and not necessarily what you have seen there but something like this material, or an invitation to a committee hearing. This runs by itself throughout the night. You have seen it on other cable companies.

**Mr Faubert:** They call it the rollout.

**Mr Somerville:** Yes. You can use it as a job mart or for invitations to tender. You see there an invitation to attend a committee hearing.

**Mr Faubert:** They run the lottery numbers, too.

**Mr Somerville:** We will have this available by the end of January.

**Mrs Sullivan:** Could you direct that kind of a video out to individual ridings?

**Mr Somerville:** No. It would have to go province-wide. If we broadcast on the satellite, then it is province-wide.

**Mr Faubert:** Good idea.

**Mrs Sullivan:** We could always try.

**Mr Campbell:** One thing I think is important was mentioned as an aside, but I can see the possibility of the job mart things that we put out on a number of occasions; that might be investigated to look at the employment opportunities, because that would go right across Ontario and be a very effective way of communicating, understanding agreements that we have with collective agreements, but maybe it is something that could be investigated.

**Mr Somerville:** It would mean amending our agreement with the CRTC and TVO but I think it would be acceptable, particularly if it was government business like this. We do put this on occasionally when we get an idea of what the business is going to be like.

**Mr Kerrio:** I would agree with some of the direction of advertising, for instance, a request for submissions to the Ministry of the Environment for bidding for particular work. In the initial stages it is something easy to do, but I would have some hesitation in continuing that without looking at alternatives that would reach a greater number of interested people who watch the program. How many people, for instance, are interested in bidding on a particular part of a request like that? It would be very minimal, as opposed to working in some tapes that would get back into the history of this Legislature and the building and all of that good stuff. I imagine that is going to take a little bit longer to produce.

I think that while we initially put things on that you have shown here, it is a very narrow, small audience that we are appealing to, to do that kind of bidding, and that we would be looking at something of some substance such as I have described and maybe a little bit of the history of this place, for whatever it is worth.

**Mrs Sullivan:** I have one comment on that, and it might be worth while for the committee to consider a protocol relating to the use of the visuals. It seems to me this is not a government channel; this is a legislative channel and there is a significant difference. I am not sure in fact that we ought to be using the channel to advertise government positions, government jobs, government tenders, etc. It seems to me it is more appropriate that we be using the channel to present information relating to the parliamentary proceedings, whether they be committee or House or other meetings that are held relating to the parliamentary activities. But it is not a government channel in my view.

**Mr Eakins:** The Premier (Mr Peterson) has appointed me to chair a task force looking into how Ontario might celebrate a number of

heritage events in 1991-92-93 dealing with the 200th anniversary of the Constitution Act, the first session of the Legislature and so forth. I am just wondering, looking at the history of the Legislature in particular, or the Constitution Act, which will be 200 years since coming into effect, is this the type of thing that we might be able to tell the people of the province more of the history of the province or especially the history of the Legislature?

**Mr Somerville:** Yes, for sure. We do run a program at the beginning of the session every day where the Speaker introduces people to the Legislative Assembly and then tells them the routine proceedings. That could easily be extended to include programs like you suggested.

**Mr Eakins:** Right at the present time we are just putting together recommendations. It is a three-month assignment to take a look at whoever might be appointed to sort of carry this off in those years. Then there would be a possibility we could meet with you or whoever is appropriate to take a look at the part that this system might play in that, because I think it is so important that we know something of the history of the Legislature back over these many years.

**Mr Somerville:** For sure. Later on you will probably read here that I have got a couple of programs. We have done one called Simcoe to Satellite, which is now running in the Heritage Room, a 10-minute program that traces the history from the first parliament to the present parliament. It is 10 minutes; we would like it to be longer, but we are ready.

**The Chair:** Mr Eakins, if at any time you want to bounce some of those things off the members of the committee, we would be more than receptive to something of that nature, because as you know, a lot of these things should be probably vetted through the committee and there would be good opportunity to do that. That is a good suggestion.

**Mr Somerville:** Just before we leave the technical thing, if I could just bring to the members' attention, normally electronics are considered like a seven- to eight-year lifespan. We are just entering our fourth year, and I think in the three and a half years we have been on the air we lost a total of one minute, which I think shows the quality of the maintenance we do here and the staff who run the system. But we should get ready for our pocketbooks in another four years again to replace bits and pieces that we are maintaining at the moment.



For example, we replaced our first set of tubes in the chamber and that is a \$15,000 item. For the videocassette recorders we are now into our third set of recording heads, which is another \$3,500 item per machine, and we have over 40 machines in the system. So, although we are doing great, we are going to run on more difficult times in the next year and then we will get a lot more breakdowns than we are getting at the moment. Hopefully, you will not see them on air, but it means the staff will be working harder behind the scenes to keep it going.

On the productions that were completed, if you move to page 4—I think of Mr Eakins's point there—Setting Fires was a recorded program on the play that we had out front, and also the Simcoe to Satellite I briefly mentioned, and Monday night's Lights Across Canada. I outlined them all there. These are generally programs in which, if there is any expense involved, the person we are working with pays the direct expenses, not the Provincial Auditor. We just finished a program for him, so he paid for the script to be written. We did it between sessions, so it keeps the staff happy and keeps us all busy.

1620

**Mr Kerrio:** Did his daughter do the artwork?

**Mr Somerville:** I am not sure who did the artwork, but they contract and they pay for any out-of-pocket expenses, and we produce the programs between sessions and when we can, which usually ends up being Fridays. We try to do these production jobs on a Friday.

**The Chair:** So what you are saying here at the bottom of page 4 is that you have a 30-second clip of each member which is on file and which members could use or which are certainly available to the media if they want to do something.

**Mr Somerville:** Yes. We send a circular to all television stations in the province. I have offered them this facility, and most of them send us a blank tape and then we dub it. So they have a stock shot of every member in the assembly on file. We try to take everybody looking his best.

Mr Eakins is probably interested in page 5. We are close to production of a program on the mace which will be a five-minute program on the history of the mace in the assembly. We are now on our fourth mace, so we are just going to retrace the history of the previous three and the current mace.

Some Honourable Members is a program that was suggested by some members of the

assembly. It is just a collection of the ladies who work in the assembly. We are just trying to fit them all together into a nice seven- or eight-minute package.

**The Chair:** Is this constitutional, only doing one for the ladies of the assembly?

**Mrs Sullivan:** Yes. They had it done for the men for so many years that this is quite appropriate.

**Mr Somerville:** I think the other programs detailed there speak for themselves. We certainly enjoy making the programs in the broadcast service and we consider it a pleasure. It is not work.

If you go to page 6, the in-house distribution, I am continually trying to expand and get more information packages on it that are of interest to the members. We have added two other channels to the News Digest. For me to add these programs and channels, I normally write to the television stations. I get their permission for us to record the news and then permission to take pieces from the news. We have added multilingual and Telelatino, so now in the News Digest we have programs in English, French and Italian. Possibly a few other languages might get added later.

**Mr Faubert:** What is "the recent Houlden inquiry"? It is still going on.

**Mr Somerville:** It has not been going on for a wee while. Also, we put on the system the New Democratic Party convention last Thursday and Friday. So when I say "a program of interest to members," I try to put it on the system, and if you come across one you think other members would be interested in, give the office a call and we will do our best to get it.

**The Chair:** I am sure everybody else knows this answer, but could you please help me. Would you tell me what Telelatino is.

**Mr Somerville:** It is multilingual's news in Italian. Every night it is on at eight o'clock.

**The Chair:** That is why I have not been watching it, because it is on at eight.

**Mr Somerville:** It is all in Italian, no English.

**Mr Faubert:** It is because you do not understand it.

**Mr Kerrio:** Barbara Sullivan had asked about this being appropriate, the national leadership convention, on this circuit. You know, Barbara, what you were asking about this being an assembly and that we have to be very careful about getting anywhere near politics on it.



**Mr Somerville:** This is only in-house. It is only in the precinct.

**Mr Kerrio:** Just in-house.

**Mr Somerville:** Yes. It does not get broadcast.

**Mr Kerrio:** Okay.

**Mr Somerville:** It is only in-house for members' use.

**Mr Faubert:** That is so that if you are working on the weekend, you can see it.

**The Chair:** So when the other parties have their national conventions, you will be having that in house here too, then.

**Mr Somerville:** Yes. If it happens Monday to Friday and someone asks for it and we can fit it in the schedule.

**Mr Faubert:** Did you get de Jong?

**Mr Somerville:** No. That was an evening news broadcast. We missed it all.

**The Chair:** Okay, the next page, the regulations and procedures. Is there anything you want brought to our attention in those sections, Mr Somerville?

**Mr Somerville:** As I say, in our haste, I have given you some figures there, but I am not sure of their accuracy. If anything, we have underestimated. In fact, on the repeat broadcast of the television proceedings, we missed out 1,000 hours, which I just caught when I came into the room here. This is the minimum number of hours we have broadcast. I am sure there are others, such as exceptional extensions. We just counted as though a committee meets in this room from 3:30 till six. You know, we took the general hours of the House, without any extensions or additional committees. At a later date, I will give you very accurate figures on these proceedings and hours broadcast and repeat broadcasts.

**Mr Kerrio:** Could I have one question? I did not follow anything in the auditor's report regarding this particular function. Was there any mention of it in the auditor's report?

**Mr Somerville:** No.

**Mr Kerrio:** In the financing, no news is good news.

**Mr Somerville:** Our budget is decreased every year and this year it will decrease again, so I think we are producing more for less money every year.

**Mr Kerrio:** Are you going to put that on the sales pitch part of that show?

**Mr Somerville:** I tell people when they come.

**Mr Kerrio:** I appreciate that. I thought it was a reasonable question. In view of some of the areas of criticism, it is to your credit that they have examined it and have not had many negative comments.

**Mr Somerville:** I try to keep friends with the auditor. We have made two programs for his department.

**The Chair:** What you are saying, according to this addendum that we got today, is that for 1989, in total, you had 544 hours of House live proceedings.

**Mr Somerville:** Yes.

**The Chair:** In total? That has not been finished yet, but that is up to a few days ago, I guess.

**Mr Somerville:** That is up until November 30. I would like to check that. We did not do it from our logs, the way we normally do, because of the shortage of time. In the logs we keep an accurate time up to within a minute or two. I would like to give you new figures on these and mail them to you. So take these as very arbitrary figures.

**The Chair:** And committee live proceedings, approximately 250.

**Mr Somerville:** Yes.

**The Chair:** And then the repeat broadcasts 219, roughly.

**Mr Somerville:** No, 1,200.

**The Chair:** With repeat broadcasts?

**Mr Somerville:** That is 1,219.

**The Chair:** I am sorry.

**Mr Somerville:** For a total of over 2,000 hours. But as I say, I would like to redo these figures. I do not think they are too accurate.

**The Chair:** What about the achievements for 1989?

**Mr Somerville:** The achievements—and thank you for mentioning the preview—we hope to do at least four of these a year, which I can update for you on what we are up to and planning. It is just getting additional work for the same amount of staff, but that is the plan.

I now have information from the cable companies which details the channels in every area and riding which the ONT.PARL is on, which you would find very useful.

I am sure members find the Clerk's table clock useful when the bells are ringing and they want to know how much time they have to get back to the chamber. I have had another request you may want to consider. I have not approached the Speaker or the Clerk with it, but I have been

asked if I could put the rundown time of question period on the air as well, so you would know there was half an hour of question period remaining, or 20 minutes, or 10 minutes. I have been asked to consider doing that, similar to our now putting the clock on a bell. Members would find it useful. If the committee agrees on that, then I will take it to the Speaker and the Clerk.

The video dubs are about the same as last year. The only thing that has changed is that we are doing longer dubs, such as 491 hours of legislative proceedings. That is what we do. I do not know what the various caucus departments do on their own, but I know it is expanding.

We run the booth at the annual cable convention show just to keep our rapport going with the cable companies. It is their time to come and ask us for information. We try to make contacts with them there so that when we have problem, we have a firsthand knowledge of the person and phone numbers.

I think I am becoming an acting host, a tour guide. As it said on the video, we are proud of the system. To my knowledge, we are still the most advanced legislative television system in the world. The British Parliament went into action only two weeks ago, based on a lot of the findings when they were here and visited this assembly. They took a lot of the stuff and, in fact, hired the same company to install the cameras and the same camera control system that we have. But they have not integrated it the way ours is to pull in graphics and to tie into the microphone, so we are still in the forefront of legislative television services, the way we do infrared and sound.

**1630**

**Mr Faubert:** Does the BBC not run theirs?

**Mr Somerville:** No, they do not. That is another part they slipped up on; they do not have a dedicated channel. They are at the mercy of the broadcasters to use what they feel of Parliament. At the moment, the BBC is running 45 minutes of Parliament a day and the independent stations, I think, are running 30 minutes a day of highlights. They choose the highlights.

**Mr Faubert:** They do not have the cable network.

**Mr Somerville:** No, they have a very small cable system in Britain, but that is increasing, and they also hope to get a dedicated channel. They are going to have an experiment of a dedicated satellite channel starting in February, similar to the system that we run. Again, I think it is based on the information they got when they visited us.

**The Chair:** As some of the members know, there was a group here a few weeks ago from Ottawa. They liked almost everything we are doing. They are going to go back and, I think, adopt a number of things we are doing here and revise their own. So we can be very proud of the work that Mr Somerville and his staff are doing and the work that the members did in 1985-86 in making the decisions on what kind of program we were going to have. That does not mean it is perfect. We can always make changes, but it certainly is a good basis on which to operate.

**Mrs Sullivan:** When the representatives from the British House were here, I recall that there was a lot of discussion relating to the change in the actual operation of Parliament or the Legislature as a result of the intervention of the camera. We assured them that we behaved the same way with or without the camera being there. Has that been raised by people who are visiting from other jurisdictions and have you ever found our members saying that the proceedings changed because of the camera? This is not a technical question, but I am quite interested.

**Mr Somerville:** That is usually one of the first questions that visiting parliamentarians ask. Does it change the behaviour? Do you have to dress up and change your style? I always advise, "No, you don't." But once people begin to look at television and see themselves, especially in our system, the way we repeat the broadcast so often, I think you become your own most severe critic and your family and spouse and whatnot soon tell you what you do right and what you do wrong.

**Mrs Sullivan:** And your staff.

**Mr Kerrio:** I do not watch it any more.

**Mr Somerville:** In my opinion, if parliaments have problems—

**Mr Kerrio:** There have been some changes in individuals.

**Mr Somerville:** —and in particular, the British Parliament is having a lot of problems at the moment because it did a trial closed-circuit system for a month and members did not like it. But the problem was they did not have any television sets close enough to the chamber where they could see a reaction, and go out to watch it on television to see how it looks. They are not organizing replays for the members to see enough of themselves on television. So they have a real problem on their hands that, thanks to the wisdom of the members here, we never had, because, instantly, we were starting to look at the



programs and the pictures from the chamber as soon as they were done.

We did a major leap-frog over all the problems by having televisions close to the chamber so that you could instantly see yourself, or you could see a replay by calling the office.

**Mr Kerrio:** There have been some changes in the video in the sense that, if you watch some, you will see them making appeals right to the camera, directly, in talking to the people watching, rather than addressing themselves to the—there are a few who do it.

**Mr Somerville:** There are a few of our members in this chamber. I think you could count on one hand members who have done that in the three and a half years I have been watching.

**Mr Kerrio:** I could name one who does it often.

**Mr Somerville:** He must be getting advice from somewhere.

**The Chair:** Do you want to take the last page then?

**Mr Somerville:** If I could touch on the future plans, the Heritage Room is a major success at the moment. We are planning to refine the video to make it even better and to make it less obvious, standing in front of the room. It will become a projection system on the wall, so you will not see this mammoth television sitting in the room. It will be projected from above the ceiling. The image will be on the wall, so it should be a very nice facility.

We have had the new audio facility on the books for three years. When we finish this room, we will start on another room if it is funded by the board.

The simultaneous interpretation is to meet the demands of Bill 8 where, if there is a committee in another committee room, we will have the facilities to move simultaneous interpretation into that room and do the interpretation. I have that in the budget for next year and, again, television monitors for committee rooms.

The budget is basically the same as it has been for the last three years and just reducing ever so slightly. We have now almost finished the television extension in northern Ontario program, which has been extended to March 1991. By that time, that will be exhausted, so this, I hope, will be very close to our budget, unless we have any major changes over the next five or six years. We will stay at this base budget with the cost of living and inflation cost built in.

The agreement between TVO and ourselves and the Speaker still is as agreed on in 1986. You

may recall they came and asked for additional funds, which this committee did not support and the Board of Internal Economy did not supply. We still have the same staff that we started with in 1986. I am glad to say only two members have chosen to leave us, so I think things are working out fairly well. I am very happy and proud of the people who work with me and for me.

That is about it.

**The Chair:** Do members have any questions with regard to the expenditures, the budget, on the top of page 3?

**Mr Faubert:** About the budget, I would make one comment. I think if you have been part of these groups from overseas or from other jurisdictions who come to see our system, it is interesting to note that they acknowledge that they consider it the premier system for legislative broadcasts. I think, on that basis, we can commend everyone on this, because I am sure it does not get you an increase in budget but it is one of the great satisfactions you probably can take from it.

**Mr Campbell:** They are watching you now on television.

**Mr Somerville:** Could I just make one request? The next time I have this, can we pick another room?

**The Chair:** Members will recall earlier we addressed the problem of sometimes not having our recommendations go forward, and maybe we would want to make some recommendations at this time and have them go forward. The clerk has made some notes, but do you wish just to put them together now? If you have some recommendations, we will put them together in a report.

**Clerk of the Committee:** The first one related to ensuring that TV monitors are installed in each member's office.

**The Chair:** The problem there was the members who were parliamentary assistants to ministers. I am not sure how many that would involve. It would not involve all parliamentary assistants, because some of them are closer to the precinct here, but I would think the Ministry of the Environment might be one of them, and the Ministry of Labour.

**Mrs Sullivan:** Women's Issues; it depends on where their offices are. Actually, it affects ministers too, I think.

**The Chair:** Ministers too?

**Mr Campbell:** Anything south of College and north of Bloor, right?



**Mr Somerville:** The ruling is that government offices look after their own facilities and the monitors are supplied to members as Legislative Assembly facilities.

**The Chair:** So it would be the ministers that—

**Mr Somerville:** The ministries, yes.

**The Chair:** It is something that we should address and we should recommend that they be installed. I guess they will have to work out who is going to pay for those, the ministries or the—

**Mr Kerrio:** Can we deal with an issue where we decide to do something before we find out what the cost is? I would hesitate to do that. I would sort of make a recommendation that we examine it and see what the cost would be and who was going to pick up the cost, and then deal with it after we get that information.

**The Chair:** Let's find out how many there are and what the problems are associated with it.

**Mr Campbell:** Maybe, to start, we could suggest looking at the present budget as submitted by Mr Somerville, plus the things that he is looking at doing. Perhaps the other recommendations could be costed out and we could do as Mr Kerrio has suggested for the next fiscal year or whatever. If we can deal with the budget in this form and the recommendations by Mr Somerville for his budget to go to the board, that would give us a start. I wonder if that is in order, that we could rule on that, then deal with the other matters that Mr Somerville might have to come back for.

1640

**Mrs Sullivan:** I am interested in Mr Campbell's remarks. It seems to me that there is a distinction of responsibility that Mr Somerville has made clear, that broadcast service is responsible for making the monitors available. The problem appears to be that the ministries, which are responsible for ensuring that the cable service exists in the offices, are not making that cable service available. The recommendation from this committee ought to be directed to the Board of Internal Economy or to the Speaker, who would advise cabinet that the responsibility is not being met in certain ministries. That is the responsibility line. Then we do not have to worry about making a recommendation for more budget, because Mr Somerville is not responsible for the parts of the budget where there is a problem.

**The Chair:** What we should do, though, is we should note and find out which ministries are affected before we go any further. Maybe you

could find out and bring a report back to this committee.

**Mr Campbell:** To clarify what I was saying, I was looking at the budget figures that were presented, plus the recommended four or five that I expect are part of this budget. That is what I was speaking to. I realize that the ministers are responsible. I was a parliamentary assistant in the Ministry of Mines. We got our cable hookup on our sets and everything through the ministry. I understand that.

What I am saying is that the first order, if our committee is meeting its mandate, is to recommend the budget and these four future plans, if that is a formal motion, to deal with those and then deal with some of the other issues that the clerk has written down. I was suggesting that as a course of action. It had nothing to do with the previous issue of ministries or anything else.

If we do not recommend these budget items, then obviously we have nothing more to say on the matter. But he has brought it to our attention, and therefore we should rule on it.

**The Chair:** I gather there is a truce.

**Mr Campbell:** Ever since the war. I was trying to clarify my earlier remarks.

**Clerk of the Committee:** Could I just clarify further? What I am getting from all of this is that the committee wants to direct Mr Somerville to investigate how many parliamentary assistants do not have television monitors.

**The Chair:** How many members.

**Clerk of the Committee:** How many members do not have television monitors, which ministries are involved and which ministries have not provided the service. Service rather than monitors?

**The Chair:** Yes, and members since it might even involve some ministers.

**Mr Somerville:** Could I ask a few questions? For service, do you mean the nine channels of in-house service?

**The Chair:** Yes. What is available to every other member around here, including the Macdonald Block, the Hearst Block, the Mowat Block.

**Mr Somerville:** The Macdonald Block gets all the nine channels, but over in the Ministry of Housing or up on Bloor, they get one channel, the channel with the House proceedings, and that is it.

**The Chair:** So if they want it in French, they cannot get it in French.

**Mr Somerville:** Right.

**The Chair:** Maybe what you should bring back then is some of the various scales of service that members receive. There may be two or three levels of service. Bring that back and then let us know what would be involved in correcting that. We will go from there.

**Clerk of the Committee:** The second item was to have a time clock appear on the screen during question period.

**The Chair:** I think we are all in agreement with that. The other thing I wonder about is the people who are hearing-impaired. You said they can get special signals or something in which they can pick up the sound or the transcription.

**Mr Somerville:** The transcription on the bottom of the screen, yes.

**The Chair:** Are they aware of this?

**Mr Somerville:** Yes.

**The Chair:** How do they become aware of it?

**Mr Somerville:** There is an organization for closed-captioning that informs and periodically writes to the hearing-impaired, saying, "Do you listen to the government service?" I do not have a promotional thing; I just sit back and let them do the promotion of it.

**The Chair:** Is this preferable? Does it work out better than the way Ottawa deals with this?

**Mr Somerville:** Oh, yes. I think Ottawa will probably change over to go the way we are going. On the program, you have possibly noticed, we have super closed-captioning so anybody watching the program at the beginning will see that it is closed-captioned. Quite a lot of televisions have now a closed-captioned sign or signal so that people watching can tell if it is closed-captioned. Also, if they have a receiver it automatically comes on their screen.

**The Chair:** What do those receivers cost?

**Mr Somerville:** They cost \$400. They are trying to get the price down at the moment and the federal government is maybe going to pay some of the cost.

**Mr Campbell:** The Society for the Hearing Impaired has a lot of information on that. They know their client group, as it were, and they promote the product actually, as I understand it.

**Clerk of the Committee:** Going back to the on-screen time clock for question period, I had written down that the committee had directed Mr Somerville to approach the Speaker and the Clerk on that matter rather than make a formal recommendation to the board. Is that what you want to do?

**Mr Campbell:** There is more policy than cost involved. It is just setting up your equipment, and therefore it is really a policy matter that perhaps the board can recommend or the committee can—

**The Chair:** It can easily be installed.

**Mr Somerville:** Yes.

**The Chair:** What we could do is have a recommendation from us that we have that incorporated and ask them to institute it. Is anybody in disagreement with that? Do you all agree that it is probably a good point? That would only be during question period.

**Mr Campbell:** And bells.

**The Chair:** It is shown during divisions and you would not have it, for instance, if you were doing a bill during some legislation at four o'clock and would show that you are going to go another two hours until you close, because I guess you do not know exactly when you are going to close. You might close down at two minutes to six or five minutes after, or whatever it is, although the Speaker always sees it as six o'clock. So you do not want anything there; it is just during question period that we are discussing.

**Mrs Sullivan:** What about during private members' morning? It would be useful to include the time in that—

**Mr Faubert:** To make sure of the time.

**The Chair:** For private members when there is a vote—

**Mr Faubert:** Private members might create a problem because unless you know that it is shared time and each is consuming so much of an hour, it would be so confusing because the clock would come on at different periods showing different amounts left.

**Mr Somerville:** I caution members not to overdo putting time clocks on because—

**The Chair:** Because it is very confusing.

**Mr Somerville:** —as you know, some members use the time, some members use more than their time and for me watching it, it would end up putting a pressure on the assembly that I do not think exists. I would caution against too many time clocks.

**The Chair:** But the question period which is one hour—

**Mr Somerville:** That is the only one I have had a request to do.

**The Chair:** I know it would be helpful because I have come back from my constituency

and then wondered how much time was left in question period, and you want to get down. If there are five minutes left, you would hardly rush down for it. Depending on how many statements preceded it, depending on how long the statements were of the opposition parties, etc, you could very well get back at three o'clock and still have half an hour left to question period; or you might get back at three and question period would have elapsed. So that would be very helpful, I am sure, for members.

**Mr Somerville:** That is exactly the point that the members have raised. They would like to see the time superimposed.

**Clerk of the Committee:** There was a third item which the committee discussed and did not make a decision about, and that was the computer control graphic display presentations. There was

some discussion about whether or not the committee should have some say in what things would be aired, such as government tenders versus committee hearings and that sort of thing. Mrs Sullivan raised it.

**Mr Somerville:** At the moment, I think with our current agreement with CRTC and our licence, I would only be allowed to do legislative business.

**The Chair:** The point was well made. I think that we will obviously have to stick with the legislative business. If there are no other matters before the committee, we will adjourn. The next meeting will be at the call of the chair. The meeting is adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1651.



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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY****Chair:** Epp, Herbert A. (Waterloo North L)**Vice-Chair:** Faubert, Frank (Scarborough-Ellesmere L)

Breaugh, Michael J. (Oshawa NDP)

Brown, Michael A. (Algoma-Manitoulin L)

Campbell, Sterling (Sudbury L)

Eakins, John F. (Victoria-Haliburton L)

Farnan, Michael (Cambridge NDP)

Johnson, Jack (Wellington PC)

Kerrio, Vincent G. (Niagara Falls L)

Sterling, Norman W. (Carleton PC)

Sullivan, Barbara (Halton Centre L)

**Clerk:** Deller, Deborah**Staff:**

Yeager, Lewis, Research Officer, Legislative Research Service

**Witness:****From the Office of the Assembly:**

Somerville, Bill, Manager, Broadcast and Recording Service













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